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APRIL, 1948

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CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES BURNHAM recently returned from France.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK, who now lives in New York, is a native of Kentucky.

JOHN BERRYMAN is preparing a textual edition of "King Lear."

LIONEL TRILLING, on leave-of-absence from Columbia, is working on a second novel.

CLEMENT GREENBERG, the Associate Editor of **Commentary,** is making a critical study of Miró which will be published as a book.

MELVIN J. LASKY is attached to the United States army in Germany.

IRVING HOWE has contributed reviews to **Politics.** He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

OSCAR HANDLIN teaches at Harvard.

GERTRUDE BUCKMAN is a fiction editor of a national weekly magazine. Her reviews have appeared in **PR, The Sewanee Review,** and elsewhere.

STEFAN SCHIMANSKI is a correspondent of the **Manchester Guardian.** New Directions will publish his book on Boris Pasternak shortly.

The remarks by Malraux in "The Double Crisis" were translated by Spencer Byard. William deKooning's paintings have been reproduced through the courtesy of the Egan Gallery; the Masson drawing, through the courtesy of the Buchholz Gallery.

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André Malraux and James Burnham

THE DOUBLE CRISIS: A DIALOGUE

Burnham: As you know, Malraux, I believe that the world is in the midst of a profound double crisis. There is a long-term crisis which began, roughly, with the First World War, and which will last at least a generation or two more—if humanity itself lasts that long. The historical content of this long-term crisis is the transition from one dominant form of society to a new form: from traditional capitalism to what I have called in my books "managerial society," though the name itself is not important.

Superimposed on the long-term crisis, like a wind-driven wave added to the deeper ground swell, is a shorter but still more acute crisis. This has been brought into being no doubt by a variety of causes, but above all by two: the discovery of atomic and bacteriological weapons; and the struggle for leadership in the organization of a world political order between Communism, directed from its Soviet inner fortress, and Western Civilization, basing itself necessarily, in terms of material power, first of all on the United States.

I have come to France this winter because of my conviction that the world crisis, the double crisis, is centered at this phase of the complex cycle in France. What happens in France during the next six months, or the next year, may well be decisive, not for the final outcome perhaps, but for this present period in Europe and even in the world as a whole.

Do you agree with me, Malraux, about the profundity of the present crisis, and its present concentration in France?

On the surface, even after a brief stay, many problems are clear enough, and can for that matter be understood by studying reports from a distance. There is a grinding inflation, and, more

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than that, an extreme disequilibrium of prices that destroys all natural relations among the various branches of the economy. Food and clothing are impossibly expensive, while rents and bus fares are impossibly cheap. There is no white bread, and in Paris there is no milk and almost no butter: the "scissors" have opened, as Trotsky described the process, and the cities are divided from the country. The official extremes of economic regimentation are counterbalanced by the wild freedom of the black market.

There is no stability in the various governments that are thrown up by the changing parliamentary combinations. There is neither clarity nor firmness in foreign policy. Every group, party and union and association, acts and speaks for itself, as if it were independent of the rest. The houses and apartments are cold, with their rooms shut off from each other. The streets in the evening, which used to be filled with people and light when I was last here, sixteen years ago, are dark and nearly empty. There seems to be going on a process of dissolution into what the political theorists of the eighteenth century would have called "a state of nature": the nation, the state, is withering, and the people are falling back into private associations and merely individual lives.

I have been reminded of a documentary movie that I saw recently. It showed a strange species of crab at the point in its development when it must totally rid itself of its old shell in order to grow the new shell without which it cannot live. The process was painful in the extreme, tortuous, slow, and in fact grotesque. The old shell was dead, but it clung nevertheless to the living flesh at a thousand points. Finally, when at last the attachments were broken, there came the most dangerous moment of all, when the old armor was gone and the new not yet gained, and the crab stood alone, exposed to all its enemies on the sea floor.

Malraux: These are clearly times of change, of metamorphosis. But, in contrast to our forebears, we are aware that the change is taking place. We are troubled, however, because we cannot grasp its nature.

While French capitalists and businessmen keep on assuring us that economic factors are decisive, they are nevertheless subject to political dictation in everything they do. They can no longer finance

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their operations, fire a worker, or fix a sales price according to their own inclination.

The French middle class has always held it an article of faith that money should first be saved up, and then passed on to the children. But what is the good of savings which are always threatened by devaluation? Workers believed that nationalization would free them from the condition of their class. They no longer believe it. Finally, the revolutionist has been disillusioned by the discovery that the working class in revolt in any nation no longer counts on the support of the international proletariat, as the nineteenth century supposed, but on the Red Army.

It is really not absurd to describe Europe as suffering from a breakdown of conscience, not unrelated to the breakdown which marked the end of Roman paganism. The European has a bad conscience: he no longer feels easy about either his privileges or his colonies. It is obviously false to think that Russia provides an example of a classless society; rather it is a country where the privileged classes judge their privileges to be legitimate. Bear in mind that there are only two countries in the world where privileges are accepted as legitimate: the U.S.S.R. and the United States. This is in part due to the recent origin of these two countries, and in part to the fact that in both of them there is still a relation between privilege and social utility.

After inventing optimism while she was conquering the world, Europe loses this optimism, with its faith in progress, as she grows weaker. You and the Russians inherit, while Europe vacillates between an ideology which would call for her resurrection and several others which excuse her death pangs.

Burnham: You describe a reality in terms of which many of the present institutional forms of French society are not so much inadequate as irrelevant. It does not seem likely that a solution can be found by the methods of the present government or of any similar government.

New parliamentary combinations, speeches about balancing the budget while passing bills that increase the deficit, new taxes that are evaded and new price levels that are laughed at on the black market, demagogy for the peasants, and rhetoric against the Com-

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munists—these amount at best to a plastering of minor symptoms.

Under such circumstances, American aid may be oil poured into a motor with ruined cylinders. The oil will be burned up in a few miles, and the machine will still be a wreck.

I have, in fact, come to believe that in our day major economic problems are not solved by economic means. The New Deal in the United States was a remarkable instance of this paradox. The economic measures instituted by Roosevelt when he took office in 1933 did not greatly differ from those of Hoover, and many of them were ridiculous from a narrowly economic point of view. It was the dynamic and integrating myth of Roosevelt and his "new deal" that swept the nation out of the depression. The War was another illustration. You will remember how the economists had proved that Germany could not fight for even six months, because of its "unsound" fiscal policies; and that the United States would collapse economically when the national debt passed one hundred billions.

Let me return, however, to France. The newspapers in Paris are full of articles and manifestoes about the "Third Force," the force that is alleged to be "the true France," the middle way between the frowning extremes of Communism and Gaullism.

The phrase, "Third Force," was, I am told, coined a short time ago by Claude Bourdet, who has been editing the newspaper *Combat* since the withdrawal of the original group (Piat, Camus, Aron, Olivier, and yourself) who had made *Combat* the most distinguished journal in postwar Europe. (I note, by the way, that of that original group, all of you except Camus are now with De Gaulle, and Camus has declined to support the Third Force.) The point of departure for the Third Force was, however, the Schuman government, which rests on a narrow parliamentary majority made up of the Socialists, the Popular Republicans, and a section of the Radical Socialists.

The formation of the Schuman government, in turn, resulted from the October municipal elections, which caused the downfall of Ramadier. Those elections showed that the present relationship of parties in the Assembly has no correspondence with the actual sentiments of the electorate: a substantial majority of the voters is divided between the Communists and the Gaullist "Rally of the French People." The Assembly group supporting Schuman repre-

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sents, evidently, only 20-25 per cent of real French opinion. There is therefore a certain irony in the claim of the Third Force to exclusive expression of French "democracy." If so, we should expect the Third Force to be the most ardent advocates of new general elections that would permit an accurate registry of the popular will. It is rather surprising for an American visitor, by the way, to learn that this democratic government of the Third Force does not allow De Gaulle's speeches to be broadcast.

Apart from this, however, it does not seem likely that a government which has been repudiated in advance by the people can carry through a firm and adequate policy. René Mayer is a man of intelligence and wide experience. But what good can his economic plans accomplish, if the government of which he is a part has no authority and cannot excite any enthusiasm?

A number of your intellectuals are now trying to enlarge the idea of the Third Force into a more philosophic and international ideology, which is already having repercussions in other countries—including the United States. When I read their statements, which are rhetorically not ineffective, I cannot, however, forget the circumstances of the Third Force's birth.

I will confess to a habitual sympathy for the middle way—when there is a middle way. Granted the limitations of man, compromise is best, when compromise is possible. But somehow this Third Force seems to me like an attempt to transform, by semantic magic, a verbal slogan into a nonexistent social reality. When I look behind the magician's handkerchief, the most I can find is a temporary deal by some of the parliamentary parties.

Malraux: The irremediable weakness of the Third Force lies in the fact that it pretends to combine bureaucratic control in economic affairs with liberalism in politics. Now whether under a Stalinist or a fascist regime, there has never been, in circumstances like these, a serious attempt at bureaucratic control which was not backed up by a powerful police and a public state of mind opposed to liberalism.

This discord is stridently evident in the economy, but it exists, at least symbolically, in all fields. Moreover, the Third Force, profoundly committed to parliamentarism, can never become more than

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a party of logrollers. At the end of the nineteenth century, the relatively feeble impact of politics on the economy made parliamentary battles of secondary importance. If General Boulanger had been the victor in 1889, the French economy would not have been noticeably changed. The genius of parliamentary leaders thus lay, essentially, in a talent for trading; and the majority of the great parliamentarians in Europe between the wars of 1870 and 1914 possessed this talent to a high degree.

Today the intense polarization of political convictions (between Stalinism and whatever may be, for the time being, its principal adversary) and the polarization of power (between Russia and yourselves) make decisiveness, and not a talent for trading, the first political virtue. Our last great parliamentarians and General de Gaulle are rather successive than contrasting psychological types. The history of our country from 1936 to 1940 runs from the compromise Matignon settlement (the great strikes of 1936 were ended without victims, but the Popular Front government, to which so much hope had been attached, wound up where we all know) to De Gaulle's summons to resistance on June 18, 1940.

Burnham: What reason have we to suppose that De Gaulle has a solution? How is his solution distinguished from that of the Third Force?

You must understand, Malraux, that Gaullism has been presented in the United States as a reactionary, dictatorial, probably fascist movement. It is, we have been told, a ganging up of the extreme Right: collaborationists, finance-capitalists, the Church hierarchy, monarchists, and landlords.

My own direct impressions have suggested that it is a movement that has not yet crystallized; that it is impossible as yet to define it because it is still in the process of defining itself. It is quickly obvious that what might be called the "official apparatus" of the existing French state—the leadership of the political parties and the unions, the influential capitalists and bankers, the Church hierarchy—is today either non-Gaullist or anti-Gaullist. This seems to imply a genuinely revolutionary potential.

Gaullism is still fluid, in organization as in direction. It would seem, therefore, that events still in the future may well control the

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outcome: the circumstances of taking power, the internal struggle for influence that is bound to take place as power is consolidated, the men who are selected to lead.

One additional feature of Gaullism is of supreme interest to me: it is the first genuinely *new* political reality since Hitler. It has come into being in France. But if this new reality remains new, and proves able to break through the present dilemma of traditional capitalism versus totalitarianism, then it cannot be confined within French borders.

Malraux: In every country, resistance to Communism takes on the color given it by the particular spirit of that country. In Germany, it was Nazism; and with us it is something which looks like the First Republic.

I said recently, in a meeting at the Vélodrome d'Hiver: "The Stalinists are not the Left, we are not the Right, and the Third Force is not the Center."

It is beyond dispute that in the field of propaganda the Stalinists have won the first round against us by convincing so many people abroad that Gaullism is a movement of the Right. Just how advantageous it is for the Stalinists to create this belief that their most dangerous enemy, General de Gaulle, is a future fascist, is plain to everyone.

As for the Third Force, if we are not the Right, what is the point of the Third Force? That is why they have to label us reactionaries.

It is really funny to see the man who recreated the French Republic painted as antirepublican; the man who crushed collaboration, as chief of collaborators; the man who abolished racial laws, as an anti-Semite; and to find him made out an adversary of women's suffrage when it was he who instituted women's suffrage in France—a step somehow neglected by sixty years of Parliaments. It is noteworthy, furthermore, that those who characterize us as fascists and reactionaries are the same persons who accuse the United States of having no other motive than the enslavement of Europe.

I am sure that your readers know by now that the Stalinists are no longer of the Left. How I should like to overhear the conversations between the leather-coated Commissars of the Republic

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and the gilt-edged Soviet Field Marshals! There is not one of the things for which Lenin stood which has not been abandoned in the country where the "Internationale," no longer the national anthem, only waits for the proper moment to be forbidden altogether.

Men suffer enough from the troubles of their own generation, but we often find them fighting about forms that have not existed since their fathers' day. A hundred years ago, when the Communist Manifesto was about to appear and when the struggle between capitalism and the proletariat had been first realized, a republican or royalist background was presupposed. It is clear that in our time, behind the struggle between capitalists and proletarians, there has begun to develop a reality of an entirely different kind. The great importance of your books, in my view, lies in the fact that they try to make this different reality apparent to us. But the real nature of a world metamorphosis is not to be appreciated in a few days, even in several years.

France is not divided today merely into capitalists and proletarians. She has, in actuality, a proletarian minority (nine million), a capitalist class whose legal basis has been vaporized, and a clandestine privileged class of middlemen which is valueless to the State because it does not participate in the process of production. A black market which lasts indefinitely is not a mere accident; it is also a form of economy.

Furthermore, this form is in itself a symptom. When I examine the economy of my country closely, I often think that I am in a never-never land. Reestablishing an economy of active production is far more urgent for us than the resolution of Marxist problems; and the ghost of Karl Marx must have a good laugh when he notes the economic basis of the career of these millionaire racketeers, who are protected by the Communist party, as they were by the German army of occupation—and will be by us, too, if we do not take care.

What Gaullism stands for, first of all, is the restoration of a structure and vigor to France. We do not guarantee that we will succeed, but we are certain that our opponents will not.

We have declared, right from the beginning of our political activity: "There is such a disparity between farm prices and industrial prices in our country that even so prosperous a nation as the United States could not survive in the face of it."

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We have declared that the party system in France, as it now functions, is in no condition to take measures for the public welfare.

These charges have been made for months. Even to this day, as you and I well know, though they are trying once again to put the old race between prices and wages into temporary order, the fundamental problem of the French economy remains untouched.

As for the political parties, one cannot repeat too often what you have been writing for years: if you call the Communist movement a political party, it is absurd to call the others political parties; and if you call the others parties, you have to find another name for the Stalinists.

The Stalinist party, whether we like it or not, is not one of the components of democracy; it is something entirely different. Kicking over the checkerboard is not just a peculiar way of playing checkers. In actuality, and certainly since the war, real democracy has ceased to exist in Europe. No real democracy can exist where the Communist party is strong. This is so true that democracy survives only in those countries where the Communist party is not powerful enough to twist political life.

Many people think, after the failure of the strikes last November, that the Stalinist party has been crushed. They are very wrong. I'll discuss it again with them this spring.

To reestablish a vigorous democracy is precisely what we wish to do, but we do not conceal the fact that it will have to be fought for.

We maintained from the beginning: "We have no faith in programs, but only in objectives. Let us define our objectives one after another, reach them as fast as possible, and then go on to what follows. To put it another way, let's begin by doing what we say." You can imagine how annoying this is to the program mongers.

We declared that we wanted to restore a free and secret ballot in the General Confederation of Labor: it has been restored. We declared that we wanted a government without Communists: and there are no more Communists in the government. We said that we would unite the country around the idea of public welfare: and the idea of public welfare has been taken up today by the Third Force, even though half of its members believe themselves Marxists, and had to make the ideological choice between the idea of class and the idea of public welfare.

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People object: "It wasn't you who put through these reforms that you cite." We answer that they were put through only because we were there; and little would be left of them were we to disappear.

Burnham: From most of the officials, businessmen, labor leaders, and intellectuals that I have met here, I have heard, like the tune of an old phonograph record, this story of the great defeat of the Stalinists. We hear the same report in the United States. Walter Lippman informs us that the cold war is finished with a complete victory. According to the editorials, Schuman ended the Stalinist danger in France. How many times the Stalinists have been finally vanquished in the imagination of these men who conceive that questions of politics, in an era of revolution, can be settled by the formulas of civics textbooks!

The announcement of the Cominform was an event of decisive significance. It proved that the Communists, counting on American paralysis induced by the approach of the Presidential election, have determined to force a decision in Europe this year. Every event since then demonstrates that their tactic continues offensive, that they retain the initiative. They are launching massive blows in rapid succession: the speeches at the United Nations, the French and Italian strikes, the winter campaign in Manchuria, the Markos government in Greece, the abdication of Michael in Rumania. How revealing that in the United States, one week after the formation of the Markos government and on the very day of Michael's abdication, the Communists actively begin their drive for Wallace as a Third Party candidate! The general line makes it almost certain that they will attack firmly, in France and Italy, within the next months.

Two opposite errors are prevalent today in connection with the problem of internal Communism. The first is the reactionary view that all troubles would be over if somehow the Communists were got rid of—shot or imprisoned, if necessary. The reactionaries overlook the fact that, even if the Communists did not exist, the positive tasks of economic reconstruction would still remain, and there would still be the same crucial need for a viable political order on both the internal and the world arena.

The second is the liberal error. It is founded on the comforting illusion that economic reconstruction will automatically solve the

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Communist problem: the illusion, that is to say, that it is not necessary to face the Communist problem, which will spontaneously "wither away" as prosperity is restored. The liberals should re-read the speech which Andrey Zhdanov, as representative of the Soviet Politbureau, delivered at the founding conference of the Cominform. They refuse to comprehend that the Communists have decided not to permit economic restoration in western Europe, and that the present Communist strength in France, Italy, Germany, and Greece is sufficient to enforce the decision. It follows that European recovery is impossible unless the Communists in western Europe are reduced to impotence. Not all the billions of a dozen Marshall Plans nor an encyclopedia of Third Force speeches and manifestoes can wish away this awkward syllogism.

Malraux: Objectively, there was no need in 1944 for Stalin to launch his party into a campaign against the reconstruction of France. Today, however, a reconstructed France could not fail to be attracted into the orbit of the Anglo-Saxon countries, in particular the United States. It is thus now indispensable for the Russians to prevent the reconstruction of France; and the enforcement of her decay can have only two consequences. Either her continuing weakness will put the country, so to speak, in a neutral position, partly occupied (by the Stalinists); or there will be a deep depression in which Communism can root itself. It is in this *objective* conflict between Soviet Russia and France that the historian will see the decisive element in the victory of Gaullism.

What do the Russians think they have to do? First, gain time until an American depression. They expect it in 1949. They assume that it may be delayed. While they are waiting, they want to neutralize the Marshall Plan and everything which might serve the same purpose. The strikes in November cost France more than a month's Marshall Plan assistance. The aim is to exasperate the American people, and to give them the idea that their dollars will be wasted. That is why I think that the question whether American aid will have the desired results is entirely dependent on the effectiveness with which the problem of Communist interference in western Europe is handled.

Burnham: It is not, however, surprising, even after a genera-

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tion of experiences of Stalinism in power, that so few of the official leaders in Europe and America have been able to understand its inner meaning. Their minds, their structure of values, have been formed by the tradition of Western civilizaiton, that is to say, the civilization which has its origin in western Europe and in Christianity. They confront a cultural force which is almost, in Kant's sense, "transcendental": which is beyond the limits of the categories of their understanding. In the language of Arnold Toynbee, whose ideas have had such a remarkable influence in America during the past year, Europe and the West are now facing an ultimate challenge. Is it still possible for the West, for Europe, to make a creative response to the challenge? Or is Europe, as a historical reality, already dead? Before answering this question, however, we must first know what "Europe" itself is. What are we to mean by "Europe"?

Malraux: Perhaps it is less easy than one would think to talk of Europe.

Let us examine, first, the cultural problem. For the great French intellectuals, such as André Gide and Roger Martin du Gard, of the generation which considerably preceded my own, Europe consisted essentially of a collection of democratic countries. If they had tried to be accurate about it, Europe would have been reduced to a curious federation of the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, France, and England. As for Spain and Italy, they were part of Europe, to be sure, but of a secondary zone while they were under fascist governments. As for Germany, you are quite aware to what degree western Europe has always seen in that nation a contrast between something fundamentally European and the eternal influence of the East.

Until the Nazi conquests, there was never any question whether England was actually a part of Europe. If we leave the cultural for the psychological plane, we notice that up to the twentieth century there have been only two countries of moralists: France and England. Take as an example the attitude expressed in European literature toward women. In all countries of Europe there are splendid, romantic feminine figures. A few of the women in German literature, and incontestably all the women in Tolstoy, are at least equal, in the sensitivity with which they are drawn, to the most convincing

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women created by the writers of western Europe. However, as soon as it is a question no longer of fiction but of judgment, we find that Goethe, and Tolstoy himself, have put down a long list of statements which no woman could read without laughing. That Nietzsche could have written, "The more a woman is beautiful, the more she is modest," makes us wonder. . . .

Then it remains to be seen whether or not Russia is culturally a part of Europe. What confuses the question is that travelers who, from the moment that they enter Russian territory, no longer feel themselves to be in Europe, assert that Russia is a part of Asia. For myself, I believe that Russia is actually neither in Europe nor in Asia, in the same way that Japan is neither in Asia nor in America.

If, rather than having been obsessed by Japanese painting, which they have known for a long time, Westerners had paid some attention to Japanese music, which they have known only recently, they would have found themselves much more at home in Japan. The Japanese scale is approximately our own. The heroic quality of Shinto song is reasonably Occidental, and the Japanese and Chinese have nothing in common in their ideas of love or loyalty or death. In these, the Japanese are far closer to the Vikings.

To get back to Russia. Ilya Ehrenburg said in a lecture, thinking I imagine of an interview which your humble servant gave on the Atlantic Civilization: "Which is really European—Tolstoy or the atom bomb?" If Russia has to be defined as the country that lacks the atom bomb, then the definition will not hold much longer—at least if it turns on that point alone.

But, seriously, as to Tolstoy. If it is a question of knowing whether the author of *War and Peace* is a European, he is incontestibly one of the major geniuses of the West. Furthermore, he was one whose mind was turned toward the Occident, proud of being compared to Balzac, and not interested in by-lines. But if you take him, not as the writer of this novel, but as Count Tolstoy, a prophet of his own particular kind of Christianity, whose death was like that of the hero of a Russian folk song, as the man who attempted to establish a new evangelism, and who proclaimed the artistic meaninglessness of Shakespeare, then the problem has a different color.

Let us sum up: the idea of Europe is far from clear on the plane of culture. In part, the notion of Europe is an inheritance. On

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the other hand, it is a geographical actuality, an actuality which is now somewhat suspect. My own opinion is that the existence of Europe is inseparable from an act of will. Once Christianity was the foundation. This required coexistence of the Christian soul and the structure of the Church. Where can we find today two similar bases upon which the occidental world can be rebuilt?

In the domain of culture we must hear from Americans themselves to what degree they believe in the existence of a specifically American culture. Let us first be clear on this point: the principal interpreters of national culture are not the same in France and in the United States. With us the representative of culture is the artist. With you it is more likely to be the professor. No one would think of comparing Hemingway, for example (I pick Hemingway because I consider certain of his novels among the most valuable of our times), with Renan or Goethe, or even Gide. Your artists are neither moralists nor men of exceptional cultural breadth. They have great talent, and are good technicians—comparable to our painters.

Granted that, I see no conflict between them and the art of the West. The idea of a rivalry between contemporary cultures is a favorite of the Stalinists, as it was of the Nazis as well as of other interpreters of German thought. It is a false idea.

They tell us every once in a while that there is a rivalry between our own culture and yours in Latin America. I cannot see in what. The human mind, in cultural matters, tries to annex all that it can, every chance it has. We might say that culture is hopelessly polygamous. Latin America makes and will make its own synthesis.

That our values in this or that field are not the same may be granted, but after all the most developed contemporary culture is pluralistic. We cannot think of one of your great museums (or of one of ours, for that matter) except as a place where different cultures meet each other. And can you really say that there is much more difference between the work of American and French novelists than between two galleries of the Metropolitan Museum, one of which displays Italian, and the other Spanish, Masters?

Burnham: There can be little doubt that culturally America is part of Europe—more accurately, is a dependent, an offshoot of Europe. If significant traces of the pre-Columbian civilizations remain

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in Mexico, Central America, and Peru, there existed in the rest of America no civilization, in the proper meaning of the term, before the coming of the Europeans, who brought with them the culture of the West as their only luggage of importance. The attempts of some American writers, during the past two generations, to manufacture a uniquely "American culture" are a combination of provincialism and imperial growing pains. It is true that certain of our institutional forms, our technology, and some modes of our rhetoric are peculiarly our own; and the distinctions should not be blurred. Nevertheless, our deeper cultural streams—our religion, painting, morality, literature, philosophy, music, and our determining political concepts—have without exception European sources.

There is perhaps here a cause more profound than political expediency or humanitarian sentiment for the unanimity with which Americans (even in the once isolationist West) today agree in the aim of European recovery. In a reversal of a kind that has not a few precedents in history, the power and material resources of the child have grown far beyond those of the parent. But we seem to sense that the death of Europe would be at the same time the withering of our own roots.

As for Russia: if the reality of Europe is inseparable from the will that Europe should exist, then certainly the Kremlin is not of Europe. Russia's present rulers intend evidently to excise, by the usual NKVD methods, those elements of her culture that have sprung from Europe. During the past two years, the purge of "Western influences," which began more than fifteen years ago, has been given a new intensity. Soviet art, writing, and even science have been feeling the whip. Our own musical circles, where fellow-traveling has long been a safe and noncommittal occupational hobby, were sent spinning by the recent blows against Shostakovitch, Khatchaturian, and Prokofieff.

Let me suggest, however, that we turn from the idea of Europe to the present geographical reality. It seems to me certain that France cannot solve even its internal problems in isolation from the rest of the European Continent, or, indeed, from the world as a whole. The question of a federated Europe is no longer a subject for high-school debates: it has been placed on the order of the day. I will go further: either western Europe puts in action, at both the

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economic and political levels, the process of federation, or Europe is in all probability finished. It will be reduced either to the slavery of the Communist empire, or to a series of fragile (and doubtless untenable) military outposts of America.

We can draw an instructive analogy from an earlier period of modern history. The first centers of post-Medieval civilization were the small Italian city-states. These progressed and prospered to an extent that will always remain astonishing. But by the end of the fifteenth century, their narrow political limits had become barriers that prohibited further development. They failed to make the creative political transition to the nation-state, and they were therefore replaced by the centers to the north. In our day, it is the boundaries of the nation-states that have become the barriers. The divided economies are being clogged and choked behind them.

To this door also, France is now the key. England can help toward federation (and her help is necessary), but England has never been part of the Continent. Europeans cannot forget in a year or two the centuries during which England's policy was always to sustain the division of the Continent. Germany has been crushed; and, besides, German initiative would appear to Europeans as a move not toward federation but toward imperial German resurgence. The other nations are too small, or too weak. The lot falls to France. If she refuses the draw, she will not thereby escape the general disaster.

I do not think that General de Gaulle and the Rally of the French People have yet made sufficiently clear their international attitude. Is your perspective one of a narrow nationalism and chauvinism, a throwback to the nineteenth century, and today reactionary in the extreme, even absurd? Or do you believe that France should take open leadership in the advance toward a federated Europe?

Malraux: If General de Gaulle has always said: "France," he has never said: "France alone." I think I am right in remembering that it was he who took the initiative, through a famous interview in the *Times,* in proposing an understanding between the different countries of western Europe which was sufficiently precise to make the Soviets speak of the "Western bloc."

It is obvious that we are not going to ignore the influence that

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France might have in Europe. Personally, I am convinced that France must either reassume its leadership or die. In contrast to certain countries, such as England, which discover their real strength by turning inwards, France has never played its part in the world save when she proclaimed and embodied certain universal values. This is as true of the France of Saint Louis as of the France of the Revolution. Louis XIV is, in the eyes of Frenchmen, one of their greatest kings, but St. Louis and the Revolution are France for all mankind.

It is a fact that cultural and political problems are separate, certainly in our time. If I had to define the present, I would say that it is the era, on the one hand, of the end of the International in politics (as the nineteenth century thought of it) and, on the other, of the birth of an internationalization of culture. We had believed that in becoming less French a man became more human. Now we know that he becomes simply more Russian. In contrast, the immense development of the techniques of reproduction (records, photographs, cheap editions) and of translation have internationalized culture to a degree never reached before. Good. But international culture is not a matter for definition; it is being created—very confusedly to be sure and not without trouble.

We know that great political federations are also being born. But under what form? I am a little shy of the word "federated." Not because of the goal to which it points, which is admirable, but because people read into the word anything they want. No one seriously believes that we can make Europe the way men made a Switzerland, or even the United States. No one in America can think that England and France will become a sort of New Jersey. It isn't enough to say that one wants to see Europe federated; it is necessary to show how this is to be done.

Everybody wants social justice, liberty, etc., etc. . . . and a Federated Europe. The problem is to achieve them. People have the idea that there is a panacea called "federation" which will painlessly transform the different countries if only they will waive certain of their national interests. There is obviously no such panacea. Associations of nations have taken many forms, with much trouble. The first was that of vassalage. Now, whether it is a question of an Atlantic or a European federation, the states of Europe will enter into neither of them except in so far as it affords a means of main-

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taining their rights. France, in particular, will not accept on any other basis.

Rome, at various times, recognized this kind of association within the Empire. The Germanic Holy Roman Empire did so under another form, the British Commonwealth under a third. The problem is to know what form this association can take in the twentieth century. Naturally it will be closer to the idea of a Commonwealth than to that of the Holy Roman Empire. But so long as we have not found the answer, it remains the greatest problem of our century.

Here we are raising a question which will not be resolved in the course of an informal conversation. In your opinion, however, what is—or will be—the attitude of the United States toward federation?

Burnham: It is true that "European federation" tends to become a slogan empty of content. How plain this is in the holiday speeches of some of our own politicians, who consider that a well-rounded parenthesis on "federation" is enough to qualify them as experts on international affairs! It is even more true that it is easier to talk about "federation" than to act to bring it into being.

I will grant you the theoretical vagueness, and, even more readily, the practical difficulties. But at the same time I remind you of the conception of politics which you have just been defending. It is necessary, you have argued, not to elaborate programs, but to define objectives, to attain them, and to go on to what follows. If the point of departure is fear for the loss of sovereignty, or dismay at the size of the problems, then the goal is lost before starting.

One road toward federation, for example, leads through a European customs union, an all-European system of money, credit, and banking, a handling of rail and truck transport, and electric power distribution in terms of Continental economics instead of national bias. . . . Defense against the advance of Communism (which long ago decided *its* meaning of "federation") requires common military and political measures. Or take Africa, which now, with eastern Europe and most of Asia for the time being shut off, is more than ever necessary to the life of Europe: could not England, Belgium, and France—the principal African powers—do better together than alone?

It is objected, usually, that all-European measures in such fields

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as I mention would "throw the national economies into chaos." One must plan with care, move cautiously, have a "long-term perspective." Can the reply be given without irony? What could be more chaotic, more desperate, than the present condition of the European national economies?

The point is, to begin.

Let me add the obvious: the Kremlin has begun, and much more than begun. Stalin and Zhdanov are not waiting for the leaders of western Europe to make up their minds.

You ask about the attitude of the United States toward European federation, and the wider question of an Atlantic federation of which the United States would itself be a part. I know that many Europeans wonder, with a very just concern, how the United States conceives its own role, and its own relation toward Europe. If Zhdanov is telling the truth about "American imperialism," the choice for Europe is hardly worth making.

It is easy to become overabstract in the answer. The facts of today are these:

First, the immediate threat to France, and to the other, still free nations of Europe, is not subjugation by the United States but enslavement within the Soviet empire. This threat is not at all abstract.

Second, the present material power of the United States greatly exceeds that of any nation or aggregate of nations outside of the Soviet sphere. Historical experience shows that from this second fact there arises, or may arise, a tendency on the part of the United States to limit the sovereignty of these nations. Thus the problem that you raise.

Third, the United States does not have either the manpower or the historical training or the institutional structure to permit it to establish a tyranny over Europe, or the world, no matter what might be the plans of its leaders. Hence the negative part of the answer.

Finally, the United States requires, objectively, a strong and prosperous Europe. There are doubtless individuals within the government who prefer a weak Europe, because weakness is easier to manipulate; and a depressed Europe that cannot be an economic rival in world markets. Nevertheless, a Europe remaining weak and depressed would be a double disaster for the United States. It would be a wounding economic liability—after all, the destitute do not

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make good customers. And it would be unable to stop the Communist advance to the Atlantic. The Marshall Plan, for all its inadequacies and its hesitations, is an unmistakable expression of our need of Europe.

The truth is that what Europe should fear in the United States is not at all its "imperialism" (that fear may become appropriate later, perhaps, but we cannot solve our children's problems). Europe should rather fear the unwillingness of the United States to accept world responsibilities commensurate with its present power.

So long as the serious possibility of Communist world conquest remains, the United States must try to influence the foreign and military policy of all accessible nations toward common defensive measures. Since Communism is a force within each nation, as well as external to it, this means necessarily also a concern with internal policy so far as internal policy relates directly to the world struggle. From this necessity there follows a limitation on sovereignty only if the general world aim is not shared; if shared, the problem disappears.

But does respect for French sovereignty mean that France (if, for example, the French Communist Party seized power) should be free to become the de facto ally of the Kremlin, or to join the Federation of Soviet Republics? I do not know the answer of Washington. My answer is, no. But I reject the question as unreal: a free France, a sovereign France, would never so decide.

Assuming the collapse of the Communist world plan, the positive problem remains. The answer, it seems to me, depends on Europe rather than on the United States. No matter how many Marshall Plans may be put into effect, the United States cannot reconstruct Europe. It can only give Europe incidental means. Only Europe can solve the problem of Europe. If Europe begins to live again, then the present material ascendancy of the United States will give way to a new world equilibrium in which cultural development will perhaps function both to harmonize and counterweigh material power.

A final fact, repeated: for Europe to live again means, in the concrete, for Europe to unite. And I want to link the problem of European federation with what is, in fact, inseparable from it—the German question.

You are doubtless aware, Malraux, that in the United States a powerful current of opinion, very influential in the government,

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takes the view that the United States should give up France as useless, or hopeless, and should adopt the policy of rebuilding Germany, and winning the German people as allies for the war that may come, or has perhaps already started. For them the Morgenthau Plan has been turned upside down.

I am inclined to believe that this point of view will win out in the United States—unless western Europe begins quickly, and in action, the process of federation. Europe cannot recover, cannot be strong, without the Germans and their work and their economy. That is why the Morgenthau Plan had to be abandoned: turning Germany into an industrial desert would have meant the slow death of ten or twenty million Germans, which was perhaps acceptable to the advocates of the Plan; but it would have meant also permanent misery for the rest of Europe. There remain then only two alternatives: to rebuild Germany as a national economic (and hence eventually political) unit, or to integrate the reconstruction of Germany's economy into the revival of European economy as a whole, along the perspective of European federation. Vengeance is not the most reliable of political guides. The serious problem is not to punish Germans, but to put them to work for the benefit of Europe.

Malraux: It is always hard for a Frenchman to think of the German problem abstractly. The hatred of Germany which exists in France is not due to the military aspect of the war. This war was not the first with Germany, and the alternation of victory and defeat is an old story. But don't forget that the concentration camps or, more accurately, the extermination camps with all that they imply in mechanized torture were not a form of warfare. More American soldiers than French died under the fire of the German panzers, but many less American civilians died in gas chambers. Let us also remember that even if the losses of France in the First World War were much more numerous, the dead of the Resistance were all volunteers. This time, death struck fewer, but it chose its victims. If we therefore take this problem emotionally, it is perhaps not without reason. But if my emotion requires you to look into my reasoning with particular care, it still does not prove me wrong.

The position of the Gaullists on the German question is summed up in a phrase: "No Fourth Reich." Why must defense against Stalin

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or the revival of Europe require the existence of a Fourth Reich?

They assure France that Germany is no longer a menace. Doubtless she isn't, under her old form; but some of us wonder if the chief question regarding Germany is not: who will be the first to reestablish the Wehrmacht? We might note, in passing, that the progress Stalin has made through General von Paulus is noticeably greater than that made by his adversaries through Schumacher. In this field, I believe that many Frenchmen have some rather sensible ideas, which should not be without interest for you.

Let me get down to essentials. Once before (around 1932), various forces—capitalists, diplomats, and others—believed that in the game against Russia, it was preferable to bet on Germany rather than on France. The result was Hitler.

Many Americans think that the plan for a federated western Germany, so often advocated by General de Gaulle, implies a backward step. If your policy, however, intends to make a sort of double Reich, of which the eastern part will have its capital at Berlin and the western part at Frankfort, it is not hard to predict the result. No matter what is done, your western Germany will succumb to the attraction of eastern Germany. First, because all of Germany which tends toward unity, tends to unite around Prussia; second, because Berlin is Berlin; and third, because Stalin will have decidedly less scruples about building all of Hitler's brass bands and festivals around Von Paulus, or even around a united German Communist party, than you would have in recreating them around Mr. Schumacher and your democracy at Frankfort.

Germany being what it is: believing once again that it never really lost the war; persuaded almost unanimously of its innocence; obsessed by the desire for a revenge all the more fascinating because Germany has not forgotten its triumphs in this last war—how can you imagine for a moment that German emotions would not throw themselves with fanatic enthusiasm into the service of a Wehrmacht created by Stalin. Federal states of western Germany might also, no doubt, be drawn towards Berlin. But the danger of the attraction would be even infinitely less, because you would not impose upon them a preliminary centralization which is only too easy to enlarge, and because the western German states would find many more obvious advantages in attaching themselves to a Western European

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federation than to a half-Reich. Remember that the inhabitants of the Saar did not vote for the Reich. Remember also that the second Reich was founded on the military defeat of France.

In a word, if European federation is achieved, I would prefer to see Bavarians in it, rather than a half-Reich; and I believe, no matter what anyone says, that Bavarians have the same preference.

I am not at all an expert in military matters, but it seems to me clear that your military defense is dependent upon your air force. Your military policy must therefore envisage the establishment of very heavily protected bases—defended not only by radar . . . but by highly mobile allied troops. It would seem curious to me if your agreements in this field with the more western parts of Europe were not more worthwhile than those which could provide, in reality, only an untenable screen.

I am convinced, moreover, that there cannot be a vigorous Europe unless it is grouped around France (you understand that I do not mean: under French hegemony). If all that we have with which to counter Stalin is a Europe based on some kind of Third Force, we might just as well give up now. (I cannot, of course, imagine Europe possible without English cooperation.) Socialism is one thing; the political apparatus of socialist parties another. I come back to what I said to you before: we are faced with the problem of creating democracy, not of reassembling its pieces.

I do not need to persuade you that energy is more important than the form it takes. What Russia has become is due less to its Marxism than to the fact that Marxism was made use of by Lenin.

Burnham: You will realize that those of us in the United States who are concerned with world politics have followed closely the attempts of France, since the war, to act as a "bridge between East and West"—or, put more brutally, to play off the Soviet Union against the United States. These attempts are natural—even justifiable, if they could succeed. It is always tragic for men to have to make an irrevocable choice.

In spite of recent events, I have the impression that many French leaders still believe in the possibility of reviving their balancing act. Perhaps that is the hidden but essential meaning of the Third Force.

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It is a curious fact that the Third Force, whose adherents are anti-Communist in their own minds, could not exist, politically speaking, without Communism. Imagine that tomorrow in France the French Communist Party should disappear, or even be seriously weakened. The automatic political consequence would be a Gaullist assumption of power. Third Force theory and practice is compelled to take account of this political reality. The theoretical symptom is the argument that suppression of the Communist movement is "incompatible with the principles of democracy." (Léon Blum, in a conversation I had with him the other day, insisted once more on this argument, which he has of course always upheld.) The practical result is that the Third Force cannot solve the Communist problem; cannot stop Communism's advance, much less reduce it to harmlessness.

The Third Force type (of individual and of organization) exists not only in France, but in all the other nations at least of western Europe and America. What I have been saying applies quite generally. The belief that democracy prohibits the suppression of Communists is a touchstone. In the United States, the organization called "Americans for Democratic Action," which is trying to become a center for our Third Force of anti-Communist liberals and democratic socialists, officially reaffirms the taboo. After all, is not Benes a typical embodiment of the Third Force?

The Third Force, as you have suggested, conceives of the democratic state as a united front with Communism. So far there have been no exceptions to the law that governs the destiny of *all* united fronts with Communism.

The meaning holds internationally as well as internally. (The international side should, indeed, come first. Your present crisis in France is at least as much a reflection of the international crisis as internally caused.) The Third Force conception of the desirable world political order is, once again: a united front with the Soviet Union, that is, with Communism. The ideal is expressed—and commented on—by the United Nations. It emerges no less plain, if negatively, from the manifesto of your Third Force intellectuals. They are equally against "Soviet totalitarianism"—and "American imperialism." What, then, are they for? That, in the manifesto, is not so plain.

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In world political reality, there are not now active three forces, but only two. The most curious paradox of all is this: that the United States, which, objectively, leads and must lead one of these two, is still governed for the most part by Third Force ideas and men. In Europe it is not perhaps understood that Washington's current tough policy toward Communism is, in the minds of many of those who pursue it, only a tactical variant of the same basic strategy that formerly dictated the soft policy. They still believe in Washington that a general and workable agreement with the Soviet Union (that is to say, with Stalinism, for an agreement with a non-Stalinist Russia would be easy enough) can be gained by the methods of a shrewd horse trader.

Malraux: And among the American groups who sympathize with the Third Force there are also horse traders.

Let us make a point of history. It is a fact that the Soviet Union recognized the Provisional Government of France before the United States did. It is not as easily verifiable, but it is my belief that the State Department made a mistake when it tried to substitute for General de Gaulle a gallant soldier like General Giraud, who was as well fitted to undertake the difficult burden of the liberation of France as I am to be a Chinese actor. Didn't your diplomatic habit of playing off one Central American General against the other perhaps have something to do with it? You must understand that General de Gaulle, because of the role he played from June 18, 1940, was for us, the only person capable of assuring the continuity of France.

France, as you know, went to Moscow. It seems to me, though, that President Roosevelt also went to Yalta—and for reasons which, even today, do not seem so bad to me. Our attempt to reach an agreement with the Russians entailed a liability which was, for France, very heavy. But would it not have been still heavier if we had refused even the attempt? I do not think that anyone could have remained in power in France, or even in the United States, if he had brought about a break with Russia, which at that time would have seemed to have no justification. The most recent relations between Russia and the West had been exclusively military, and what the West then chiefly knew of Russia was the bravery of her troops and the enormity of her losses.

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In matters concerning the R.P.F., however, General de Gaulle took a stand from the first. From his Strasbourg speech on, he has proclaimed that the United States alone could help France, and that he was anxious for this help to whatever degree did not put French sovereignty in question.

You know as well as I that there can be neither political nor national defense by a country whose Government is incapable of choosing its enemy.

It is my conviction that any real French Government (I mean by that a Government which *wills* and not a Government which negotiates ad infinitum) is compelled to choose. I might add that the country has already made its choice, and that this shows at times vaguely, at times sharply, as the danger of conflict approaches or recedes.

In France, there are approximately 6 per cent of real Communists (whether party-card holders or not), and about 15 per cent of more or less desultory sympathizers. In the face of a concrete threat, I predict that the 6 per cent will remain Communists, and that practically all of the others will be with you, or neutral. You may draw your own conclusions.

Burnham: What about the French writers and intellectuals? I am delighted to find that so many of them are moving away from Communism. But toward what? The manifestoes in favor of the Third Force, which *Combat* printed, were signed by a considerable number of intellectuals. The words, however, seemed orthodox, and rather pale abstractions. Among those who signed were several of the Existentialists, whom we have come to know in the United States during the past two years. It is amusing to note that the Existentialists, whose books define man exclusively in terms of "choice," are lining up with the Third Force; that is to say, at the moment of crisis they have refused to choose.

Malraux: Why not set the names of those who did not sign the manifesto opposite the names of those who did: Bernanos, Camus, Claudel, Romains, myself (I almost forgot) . . . ? Those who signed this Third Force manifesto belong to two very different groups: Christian Democrats and Socialists. I know most of them, and I

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believe that their support of the Third Force, which will be merely abstract in any case, is based upon a confusion between two things that have nothing in common with each other: political liberalism and cultural liberalism.

True liberalism in the spiritual order not only does not exclude strength of will, but is founded on it. On the other hand, to seek protection for freedom today through a liberal political structure—that is to say, one which is habitually opportunistic, and thus, in my view, tied to the nineteenth century—is pure folly. Cultural liberalism leads toward the greatest possible freedom. Political liberalism, of the kind which we have been discussing, leads to eternal National Fronts, that is to say, to confusion. You have demonstrated conclusively that there has never been a fair competition in an alliance between liberals and Communists. What was true when you wrote it seems to me even more true today.

Among my manuscripts which were destroyed by the Germans, there was an essay on Colonel Lawrence. Do you know what attracted me in this remarkable figure? In this man of action—one of the most vigorous produced by the War of 1914—we can find, if we accept the testimony of his letters, the very type of liberalism in the intellectual sphere. I believe, and this may seem strange to you, that there is developing in the world a new human type: the liberal hero. Like all these prototypes he is a myth, but I believe that in twenty years a great part of human ideals will orient themselves about him. This seems as clear to me now as, in 1941, it seemed plain that the central cultural problem of 1950 would be the first vague appearance of an Atlantic culture.

I am not saying that Gaullism proclaims or even defends what I have just said; but I believe that it is only among the Gaullists that there can develop the human attitude of which the liberal hero would be the symbol. General Leclerc was not a mere figurehead, even to the Communists, despite what their papers said.

Symbolic types of this sort are born from the clash, at certain moments in history, of attitudes which up to that time seemed irreconcilable. We would scarcely have believed, in 1938, that a combination of tremendous energy, of violence, and of humanitarian conviction was possible. Nevertheless, that very combination appeared in the figure of the Bolshevik. Every great form of politics which

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surpasses the politics of politicians creates its particular human type. Let us hope that ours will be of that creative order.

Burnham: Most well-known American intellectuals have not gone through the refining flames of real Communism. They have only reddened their skins a bit in the lukewarm baths of polite united fronts. Indeed, a much higher percentage of our intellectuals than of yours has never been touched by Communism.

Is this a strength or a weakness? In spite of my present rejection of Communism, a rejection which I believe to be final and—one might say—absolute, I nevertheless often feel that *the experience of Communism* may have been a necessary phase in the moral development of our generation. Two men today who seem outwardly to agree completely in their views will continue to sense an age between them if one has, and one has not, lived *through* Communism. Truth in this case seems not rational and objective, from the outside, but what the followers of Kierkegaard would call subjective, existential.

But perhaps, like the smug boast of a reformed drunk, this is a self-protective illusion of those of us who have ourselves been through Communism. If our eyes remain bleary, it may be that the sights can be accurately taken only by those who, by nature or luck or even moral coarseness, were immune to the disease.

There is now a broad movement of American intellectuals away from Communism. No doubt the Marxists are right, in part, when they scornfully say that this is a response to the mounting "imperialist" pressures. But it is also deeper than that. The movement is so far largely negative. The intellectuals find momentary shelter under a wide variety of cover: mysticism, hedonism, pacifism, practical politics, vague anarchism, art for art's sake, or mere personal careerism. They are like uprooted mileposts, stretching out from the Marxist starting point, along a winding road whose end has not yet been discovered.

Malraux: Here, perhaps, we get to the heart of the problem. Let us note this first: in practically all countries a certain number of writers of the first rank were Communists, and others (the majority) were what the Communists call fellow-travelers. Later, they broke with the party—usually violently. The Communists generally

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try to explain the break as the result of personal interest or economic pressures. By all the evidence, these explanations are absurd. Hemingway, André Gide, and so many others were made neither more nor less rich by breaking with the party, nor had they been by following it.

I believe that the explanation lies in this: the anticlerical campaigns which the Stalinists launch from time to time have concealed the obvious truth that for many intellectuals the Communist myth is the final development of the Christian myth.

I know very well that insofar as the proletariat has recourse to dictatorship, it turns away from the Christian ideal. But Marx thought of this dictatorship only as a provisional and necessary means for achieving social justice, without which there could not be, in his view, any true justice.

Furthermore, negative attitudes played a major role, after 1920, in the European democracies. Our earlier radicals were, first of all, anticlerical; and our intellectual fellow-travelers, antifascists. I never belonged to the Communist Party, but I was President of the World Committee against Fascism. I had the fortunate duty, with Gide, of conveying to Hitler the protest against the vicious condemnation of Dimitrov for the Reichstag Fire. (What is the ghost of Petkov thinking on that subject?) The violent break between the artists and the bourgeoisie, which began much earlier, inevitably led almost all of our artists and intellectuals to a passionately antibourgeois point of view. In their eyes, it was impossible to excuse the class which left Verlaine and Gauguin abandoned in hospitals. It is not absurd to say that they embodied their hopes in the proletariat.

We must not forget that in the early years of the Russian revolution, Maiakovsky was a national poet, and Chagall did the decorations for the Jewish Theater in Moscow. The ideals of artistic freedom and social freedom fused in a world which itself seemed heroic and apocalyptic. But from year to year Soviet realities forced those who knew them to take note of the break between these two myths. The Cheka was first conceived as a terrible necessity; the GPU afterwards and now the NKVD appear more and more like a fourth estate. I mean by this that the police in totalitarian states are not merely a larger version of the kind of police found in other countries. They are an organism peculiar to, and bound up with, the totalitarian state, just as parliaments were a part of nineteenth-century democracy.

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The concentration camps, the idea of collective guilt, the denunciation of parents by their children, belong, even in the eyes of apologists, to a world where the Soviet Union seems to have taken over the heritage of Byzantium. No one can think of them as part of the Christian universe. All this is also, of course, mixed up (though to an ever lessening degree) with the Slavic passion for brotherhood.

Stalinism represents at the same time Sparta and Byzantium. You, who are a historian, can realize how everything is taking place as if the world were once more going to oppose the Eastern Roman Empire to the Empire of the West.

Burnham: In the cultural order, I know very well what the Eastern Empire wants. But what do you want for the West?

Malraux: What I think about this subject is based upon the following premise: The idea of a democratic culture, which seemed vague and suspect in the nineteenth century, has grown clear and valid in the twentieth century because of the *development of the techniques for reproducing works of art*. Painting and music have at last discovered their printing press.

In each of the large provincial cities of France, there is a museum housing a large number of the usually abominable academic paintings of the Third Republic. We would first like to see those paintings gathered together in the attic of one of the museums in Paris (where art is involved, it is never good to destroy anything). Their place in the provincial museums would then be taken by the most perfect reproductions, in the original size, of the hundred or so masterpieces of painting now scattered all over the world.

In this setting there would also be available and open to everyone a record collection, a collection of movies, and as many reproductions of other works of art as are published.

Lack of money would be no real obstacle. We could take advantage of the copyright machinery. As you know, every publisher has to send two copies of each published work to the National Library. If we were to set up, say, fifty cultural centers, all that we would need would be an amendment to the law which would require a deposit of fifty more copies than at present. The publishers and the record manufacturers are for it. The problem would not be to gather

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together in the cultural centers all published books and records, but only those that have genuine cultural interest. A qualified commission would select the works to be deposited, and would thereby guarantee the quality. Even the movie producers have agreed to the idea of making their films available for circulation among the cultural centers, in the hope that the certifications of quality would give them the likelihood of greater profit. I may add that such a plan would probably stimulate interest abroad, particularly in your country. Many American colleges would be delighted to see the outstanding masterpieces of French painting, which for a century has led the world, published in full-size reproductions—not to mention the paintings of the rest of the world.

This is not merely a more or less clever scheme, but a concrete expression of what I call cultural democracy: democratic in the sense that it creates a facility which invites use by anyone who cares to take advantage of it, but does not force the masses through another political rolling mill. The Russians issue their new icons in the form of portraits of Stalin. With us, it isn't a question of spreading pictures of General de Gaulle, but of opening, to all comers, the doors of their cultural past.

Burnham: What is to be the relation between the life of art and the life of action?

It has been of extraordinary interest to me to discover that just now, when you are involved in political struggle more fully and prominently than ever before, there have been published in Skira's beautiful editions your essay on Goya and the first volume of the *Psychologie de l'art*: *le musée imaginaire.*

Malraux: When I wrote the Goya piece, it must have been because Goya was one of the few painters whose work was in accord with struggle. As for my *Psychologie de l'art,* the volume which has now been published was actually planned before the war. The Germans destroyed my manuscript. I rewrote it, helped by the memory.

The idea of an incompatibility between the life of art and the life of action seems to me comparatively recent. After all, Sophocles, Dante, Bacon, and Cervantes were men of action, and three of them were soldiers. Henry James and Flaubert do not represent the eternal prototype of the artist.

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I don't doubt that it is hard to be at the same time both artist and man of action, because art, in any field, involves a kind of obsession, in order to distill the whole world into the work of art, while action implies the distillation of the world into the action itself. The two forms of distillation are different, but they can be successive. One of my characters remarks that he wants above all else: "to translate the widest possible experience into consciousness." This formula remains valid—at least for me.

Paris, 1948

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Elizabeth Hardwick

EVENINGS AT HOME

I am here in Kentucky with my family for the first time in a number of years and, naturally, I am quite uncomfortable, but not in the way I had anticipated before leaving New York. The thing that startles me is that I am completely free and can do and say exactly what I wish. This freedom leads me to the bewildering conclusion that the notions I have entertained about my family are fantastic manias, complicated, willful distortions which are so clearly contrary to the facts that I might have taken them from some bloody romance, or, to be more specific, from one of those childhood stories in which the heroine, ragged and castoff, roams the cold streets begging alms which go into the eager hands of a tyrannical stepmother.

I staggered a bit when I actually came face to face with my own mother: she carries no whips, gives no evidence of cannibalism. At night everyone sleeps peacefully. So far as I can judge they accuse me of no crimes, make no demands upon me; they neither praise nor criticize me excessively. My uneasiness and defensiveness are quite beside the point, like those flamboyant but unnecessary gestures of our old elocution teacher. My family situation is distinguished by only one eccentricity—it is entirely healthy and normal. This truth is utterly disarming; nothing I have felt in years has disturbed me so profoundly as this terrible fact. I had grown accustomed to a flat and literal horror, the usual childhood traumas, and having been away from home for a long time I had come to believe these fancies corresponded to life, that one walked in the door, met his parents, his brothers and sisters, and there they were, the family demons, bristling, frowning, and leaping at one's throat. I was well prepared to enjoy the battle and felt a certain superiority because I was the only one among us who had read up on the simplicities and inevitabilities of family life, the cripplings and jealousies, the shock of

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birth and brutality of parenthood. When I did not find these hostilities it was just as if the laws of the universe had stopped and I became wary and confused. It is awful to be faced each day with love that is neither too great nor too small, generosity that does not demand payment in blood; there are no rules for responding, no schemes that explain what this is about, and so each smile is a challenge, each friendly gesture an intellectual crisis.

I cannot sit down to a meal without staring off in a distraction and when they ask me what I am thinking I am ashamed to say that I am recalling my *analysis* of all of them, pacing again, in some amazement, the ugly, angry, damp alleys I think of as my inheritance. But now that I look around the table and can see these family faces—my father's narrow skull, the sudden valley that runs down my mother's cheeks from the ears to the chin, my sister's smile which uncovers her large, crooked teeth and makes one think for the moment that she is as huge as an old work horse, though she is, except for her great teeth, very frail—everything I see convinces me that I have been living with a thousand delusions. The simple, benign reality is something else. (I have only one just complaint and that is that the radio is never turned off.) But where are the ancient misdeeds and brutish insufficiencies that have haunted me for years?

My nephew, a brown-haired boy of three, disconcerts me as much as anything else. When I take him on my lap I feel he is mocking me for the countless times I have lamented that he should be doomed to grow up *here*. Since the day of his birth I have been shuddering and sighing in his behalf; I have sung many requiems for him and placed sweet wreaths on his grave; but often he looks at me, perhaps noticing the lines on my face and the glaze on my eyes, as if he were returning my solicitude.

At least one thing I anticipated is true and it makes me happy to acknowledge that I am bored. The evenings are just as long as ever, dead, dead, "nothing going on." I take a deep breath and yearn for the morning so that I can go downtown to see how the old place is coming along. And when I get on the streets I see vigorous, cheerful faces which, in spite of the dark corners and violent frustrations in small-town life, beam with self-love and sparkle with pride. These magnificent countenances seem to be announcing: Look! I made it! And the wives—completely stunned by the marvelous possession of

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these blithe, busy husbands. They sigh tenderly under the delightful burdens of propitious marriages and smile at the less fortunate with queenly compassion. Some wan, sensitive souls carry the dreadful obligations of being "wellborn" and do their noble penance by assuming an expert, affecting dowdiness, like so many rusty, brown, pedigreed dogs who do not dare to bark.

There is something false and perverse in my playing the observer, I who have lived here as long as anyone. Still these bright streets do not belong to me and I feel, not like someone who chose to move away, but as if I had been, as the expression goes, "run out of town." I can remember only one person to whom that disgrace actually happened and he was a dapper, fastidious little man who spoke in what we used to call a "cultured" voice and spent the long, beautiful afternoons in the park beside the wading pond in which the children under five played. No doubt he too went to New York, the exile for those with evil thoughts.

For the first week or so everything went well here and I was, during this sweet coma, under the impression that I might have a fine time. And suddenly a terrible thing happened. Just after dark I walked up to the mailbox, a few blocks away. On the way back home I passed a group of small, identical, red brick houses, four of them, each with a low concrete porch and a triangular peak at the top. In one of these houses I saw him, sitting alone on the porch, with a ray of light from the inside hallway shining behind his head. I stopped involuntarily and gasped because his face seemed with the years to have become much larger. It was incredibly ugly and brutal, a fierce face, rather like a crocodile's with wide, ponderous jaws, sleepy reptilian eyes, heavy, indolent features in horrible incompatibility with his fresh, pinkish skin. I walked on quickly without speaking, but my heart raced painfully, and I prayed I had not been recognized. When I reached my own house I was almost out of breath and rushed into the living room, believing I would ask what he was doing here in our neighborhood, what had happened to him in the last years. But I did none of these things. Instead I looked suspiciously at my mother, trying to decide why she hadn't mentioned him or if she had forgotten that I once knew him.

"You devil, you witch!" I thought, enraged by her bland face

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and even despising the dark blue dress she wore with a frill of chaste white organdy at the neck.

"What's the matter, sister?" she asked.

"Don't call me *sister,*" I said, "it makes me feel like a fool. And if you want to know what's wrong, I don't like that dress you're wearing. It isn't good for you."

"How funny. I'm always getting compliments on it. But, I don't care one way or another."

The face on the porch belonged to a young man I had not seen for years, but whom I had once thought myself in love with. Had he always looked so sinister, so bloated with ignorance and lethargy? I tried to remember a younger, healthier face with some brightness or pathos that had appealed to me, some gaiety and promise; anything except that large, iron, insentient image on the porch. But I remembered nothing comforting, not even one cool, happy afternoon in which he was different from the dark, hateful person living out some kind of life a few steps away from me. It was not love I had felt, not *really* love, I assured myself, but simply one of those incomprehensible youthful errors.

"Mama," I said, "forgive me. The funny thing is that I honestly like that dress *better* than any you have."

"Make up your mind," she said with good humor. I said good night, but on the steps I turned around and saw my father looking at me, his blue eyes dark and strange with an infinite sadness. *He knows, he knows,* I decided. Men can sense these things. Let me die now.

I went to bed and in the darkness and stillness I felt the mere existence of the man I had seen to be sickeningly important to me. I was appalled by the undeniable fact that I had once been his slave, had awakened each morning with no thoughts except how I might please him. As two numb beasts we had found each other and created a romance. It was somehow better to believe that in him I had simply recognized an equal than to answer the shocking question as to why, if I was in any way his superior, I had been so violently attached to him.

It all came back to me: I had not only been in love with him, but he had required courage, daring, and cunning on my part. It had not been easy and I cannot excuse myself by saying we were

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"thrown together" when the truth is that every effort was made to tear us apart and only my mad-dog determination prevented that. And I began to hate my brother, my own flesh and blood, now dead, poor boy. It was he who started interfering and I can still see him, his face twisted with wonder and fear, saying, "How could you?" My brother's case was weakened, even in his own mind, by his inability to accuse my friend of anything except frightening, depressing stupidity. Oh, is *that* all? I must have thought victoriously, because I continued to make clandestine engagements and took no interest in anyone else.

I heard my parents coming up the steps—thump, thump, closer and closer—and then like the killer in the movies they passed by the one marked for destruction and went to their own rooms. But this is impossible, impossible, I resolved; I must face it. (Self-analysis, bravery, objectivity. Is anything really *bad?*) Yet it was so difficult to recall those old days, almost beyond my powers to see myself again. I couldn't even remember when I had first met that terrible creature. It seemed to have been in high school, some dull, immoral season, a kind of Indian summer romance. On the other hand, I had the weird and disturbing notion that I had known him since infancy, which is quite possible since he has lived off and on in our neighborhood or else we could not have gone to the same schools. *In any case I remembered that he was literally not interested in* anything, did his lessons with minimum competence and never became involved in anything he learned, never preferred one subject to another, since he was equally mediocre in all of them. He played sports but was not first-rate in any game, even though he was physically powerful.

A few other mortifying things flashed through my mind. His behavior had only two variations: he either went blindly through the days like a stupefied giant or then quite suddenly, as if bored by his own apathy, he would laugh at everything, burst forth in this rocking, strange sound as if some usually sluggish portion of his brain had flared up in a brief, dazzling moment. The laughter must have cost him great effort and he engaged in it only out of a rudimentary social instinct which at times told him that he owed the human race at least that raucous recognition. The other aspect of him I remembered was that, though he initiated nothing, things were always

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happening to him, one disaster after another. Violence erupted spontaneously in his presence and he was usually the victim. He was always either limping or wearing a bandage; he fell out of trees as a child, got shot in the leg when he was old enough to go hunting, lived through so many narrow escapes and calamities that finally shocks left no mark at all upon him.

But there must have been something else. What happened between us? No, no, merciful stars, not *that!* But yes, and on a gray, November afternoon, mad and dark, and as though I had just come into the world, an orphan, responsible to no one, magnificently free. Embraces and queer devotions, ironically mixed with that fine, beguiling notion of those years in which one thinks himself chosen from all people on earth for happiness. "I'll love you always! Nothing can separate us!" And it was true, for in his anarchic face, in his non-human, reckless force, I saw the shadow of something lost, some wild, torrential passion lived out years and years before in my soul. How shameful! What unutterable, beautiful chaos! Yes, it was he, he, image of all the foregone sin that forever denies innocence. Nothing can ever separate us.

How I regretted that walk to the mailbox to send a letter to New York. If I hadn't done that there is at least a good possibility that I might never have seen him again and might have been spared that long night in which I tried to account for humiliating days and emotions. I couldn't sleep at all and yet I didn't want the night to pass because it seemed to me that once morning came everyone in town would remember what kind of man I first fell in love with.

I looked up the dark street in the direction of his house and thought, suppose, great heavens, that I had married him. This idea completely unnerved me because I had wanted to marry him and would have done so if he had not violated one of those rigid, adolescent, feminine laws. I finally broke with him only because he went away for three days and didn't write to me on each of them. His infidelity crushed me and with real anguish I forced myself to say, "My heart is utterly broken. If you don't care enough for me to keep your promises. . . . " The thought of the risk I had taken chilled me to the bone. I might at this moment have been asleep in his house, my stupid head pressed against his chest, touching the stony curve of his chin.

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At last I dozed off and when I awakened late the next morning there was great commotion downstairs. We were going on a picnic. I threw myself into the preparations so gleefully that my mother was taken aback and said, "If you like picnics so much I'm surprised you haven't mentioned them before."

Another week has passed and I have found the temerity to see some of my old friends. They are all somewhat skeptical of me but not for the right reasons. It is a great relief to learn that I am thought of only as "radical" and though I know that is not meant to be a compliment it seems quite the happiest way out and so I try to keep that aspect of my past in the public mind on the theory that nice people demand only one transgression and if they find a suitable sin they won't go snooping around for more. Perhaps I have over-played it a little, become too dogmatic and angry. (Extremes of any sort embarrass small-town people. They are dead set against overexertion and for that reason even opera singers and violinists make them uncomfortable because it seems a pity the notes won't come forth without all that fuss and foolishness.)

Even I was taken in by my act and it did seem to me that when I lived here I thought only of politics. One afternoon, overwhelmed by nostalgia and yearning for the hopeful, innocent days in which we used to talk about the "vanguard of the future," I went to the old courthouse. Here our radical group, some six or seven snoring people on a good night, used to meet. I found the courthouse unchanged; it is still the same hideous ruin with the familiar dirt and odor of perspiring petitioners and badgered drunks who have filed in and out for a hundred years, the big spittoons, the sagging staircase. When I left I heard the beautiful bells ringing to announce that it was five o'clock and I went home in a lyrical mood, admitting that I had spent many happy, ridiculous days in this town.

For some reason I could not wait to reach the garage next to our house where my father keeps his fishing equipment. I saw there the smooth poles painted in red and green stripes and I intended to rush into the house, throw my arms around my father's neck, and tell him how many times in New York I had thought of him bent over his workbench, and that I despised myself for criticizing him for going fishing instead of trying to make money.

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But just as I stepped upon the back porch I stopped and pretended to be admiring an old fat hen which the neighbors had intended to kill long ago but hadn't found the heart to do so because the hen has a human aspect and keeps looking at them gaily and as an equal. I was not thinking about the hen; I was wondering, of course, why my family hadn't mentioned that my friend was living on the street. We had spent many hours talking about new tenants, deaths and births, who had become alcoholic or been sent to the asylum. It wasn't like my mother, a talented gossip, to forget such an arrival, and I concluded sorrowfully that she remembered all my lies and tricks and thought me guilty of the one, unforgivable wrong. Yet when I finally entered the house my family was in such a good mood I hadn't the nerve to mention my suspicions. Perhaps they want to forget me, I thought. Silly, proud people who must see the broad face of the boy on the street and recoil, thinking, "Oh, my sweet daughter! What dreadful horrors she was born with. . . . Some genes from an old Tennessee reprobate who cropped up in the family, passed on, and now wants to live again in her."

I will force nothing, I decided. It will all come out and then I shall leave forever, vanish, change my name, and begin over again in Canada.

Several nights later I went to visit a friend in the neighborhood, a girl who weighs over two hundred pounds and who is so fearful of becoming a heavy, cheerful clown that she is, instead, a mean-spirited monster. And yet her malice, which is of a metropolitan order, is often quite entertaining, and I might have stayed longer if I had not begun to imagine the inspired tales she could tell on me. Her small eyes seemed to contain all my secrets and I could see her plump, luxurious mouth forming the syllables of misdeeds even I could not name. At nine o'clock I went home where I found the house dark and supposed my family had gone out for a few minutes, perhaps to the drugstore or across town to the ice-cream factory. This was the moment at last. I felt it acutely.

There he was, sitting on the steps, smoking a cigarette. I realized it was he the moment I saw the figure, the wide, slumping shoulders, the head turned somewhat to the side. Even in the dark I felt his slow, calm, somnolent gaze upon me.

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"Is that you?" he asked in a low, untroubled voice that is unlike any I have ever heard before. It seems to come at you from a great distance, rolling like a wave.

"Yes, it is," I answered lightly and in exactly the opposite way I had planned. But after I had spoken so hospitably I began to worry about my family. They might return at any moment, and I couldn't bear them to find him here, couldn't endure their curious glances, questions, and recollections of the past.

"Don't bother me!" I said rapidly. "I don't want to see you. What are you doing living around here anyway? It isn't fair for me to come home to this. . . . I'm different now."

I could see his face quite well now and apparently he too had changed because he actually registered an emotion. He looked at me with disgust, his mouth opening slowly and curiously, his lazy eyes blinking at me reproachfully.

"Bother you?" he said. "What do you mean? Come back to what?"

I began to tremble with impatience. "Don't you see?" I whispered desperately. "I don't want them to know I've seen you again. It would just start up the old argument."

He put his hand on my arm to steady me and I looked angrily into his wide, immobile face. It was not frightening, but simply infuriating for it had a kind of prehistoric, dumb strength, so that he looked like some Neanderthal ruler, superb and forceful in a savage way, and quite eternal. My ghastly darling.

"Never mind. Dear God, it's too late now," I said, because I saw the car driving up in front of the house and in a fit of weakness I sat down beside him on the steps and buried my face in my hands.

I did not look up when I heard my parents saying something dryly and politely, saying nothing much because they sounded tired and sleepy. The perspiration on my forehead dampened my hands, but somehow I was able to stand up and bid my old friend good night. I smiled at him and he returned this last gesture shyly, and turning away his eyes seemed in the evening light a soft, violet color.

As I went into the hall I stopped before the mirror and saw that my cheeks were burning and that there was something shady and subtly disreputable in my face. My mother was taking the hairpins out of her hair. The great mysterious drama had passed, but I knew that I could not stay at home any longer.

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The next day I prepared to leave and I noted with astonishment that I had been at home nineteen days. We packed my bags, and my mother said she thought the trip had done me good. "You're not quite as nervous as when you arrived," she observed.

"Not as nervous!" I said. "I'm a wreck!"

"Well, go on back to New York if it makes you feel better," she said wearily.

"I don't feel exactly wonderful there—"

"There's only one answer to that," my mother said, slamming the door as she walked out of the room. "There must be something wrong with *you!*"

I ran to the door and opened it so that she would be certain to hear me. "If there is something wrong with me it's your fault," I said triumphantly.

"Mine!" she called back. "What madness!"

For some reason this altercation put me in a good humor. Now that I was leaving my feelings shifted every five seconds from self-pity to the gushiest love and affection. I even began to think how nice it was at home, how placid. My father came in and I could tell from the serious expression on his face that he was thinking of important matters. I'm sure he meant to make me very happy but he had a way of expressing himself that was often misleading and so, with the most tender look in his eyes, he informed me that *in spite of everything* they all liked me very much. I graciously let that pass because I was, in my thoughts, already wondering whether once I was away, home would again assume its convenient sinister shape.

There was only one thing left to do in Kentucky, a little ritual which I always liked to put off until the end. My mother mistakenly believes that I mourn my dead brother and tomorrow morning there will still be time before the train leaves to drive out to the cemetery where he lies. The pink and white dogwood will be flowering and the graves will be surrounded by tulips and lilacs. At this time of the year the cemetery is magnificent, and my mother will not let me miss the beauty. When we get there she will point to the family lot and say, "Sister, I hate to think of you alone in New York, away from your family. But you'll come back to us. There's a space for you next to Brother. . . . In the nicest part. . . . So shady and cool."

And so it is, as they say, comforting to have these roots.

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COMMENT

THE POLITICS OF DESPERATION

In the last few decades politics has made greater claims on intellectual life than ever before in modern history. The reason, of course, is that our intellectual fate has been closely bound up with our political fate; and what with the succession of crises, wars, revolutions, and counter-revolutions that marched back and forth across Europe and America, our political fate has been constantly at stake.

It has been a time of extreme situations. And one of its most typical figures has been André Malraux, who might be described as a writer with a flair for the extreme. At almost every turn, he played an active and dramatic role; hence his career, both in his life and his work, reads to some extent like a timetable of the period. In the thirties Malraux was one of the literary spokesmen of the Communist party, and his novel *Man's Fate* presented a Marxist version of the struggle for power in China. Somewhat later, in the period of the Popular Front, Malraux wrote *Man's Hope,* an antifascist story that followed rather closely the Stalinist line. After the Nazi-Soviet pact Malraux broke with the Communists, though his precise activity or position during this time is not generally known. Nor do we know very much about Malraux's role in the Resistance, except that it was an active and courageous one. Now that we are in another political crisis, marked by a reshuffling of the anti-Stalinist forces in an attempt to stop the Russian advance, we find Malraux once again in the thick of things, this time as the leading apologist for the Gaullist movement in France. Once again Malraux has cast himself in an extreme and desperate situation.

Up to now we have known very little in this country about De Gaulle and his movement, though what we have known has been enough to make us, to say the least, quite wary of it. And while we have not been disposed, as many leftists have been, to pin the

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fascist tag on any movement that is ready to oppose Stalinism, still we have felt there were many unknown quantities—perhaps many grave political dangers—in the new political force being generated by General de Gaulle. So far, however, our attitude has been based largely on rumor and speculation. Now that we have before us Malraux's explanation of Gaullism, we should at least be in a better position to make up our minds about it. Hence, the document published in this issue of PARTISAN REVIEW has for us the double interest of presenting Malraux's latest views, and of being the first semi-official statement to be published in this country of the aims of the Gaullist movement. (Since Burnham's role in the dialogue is largely that of an interlocutor, his own political opinions are not at issue here, so that we need not discuss the serious differences between his views and those of the editors of PARTISAN REVIEW. It might be said in passing, though, that Burnham's questions strike us as being acute and frequently more concrete than Malraux's replies.)

Taken as a whole, the dialogue is both a political and cultural statement. But the cultural views expressed in it might easily be separated from the political views, because the main question it poses for us is a political one, and because Malraux, being a cultural pluralist, would probably be the first to disclaim any systematic relation between his ideas on art and his ideas on politics. As for the political content of the dialogue, that, too, might be divided into two parts: the diagnosis of the crisis today and the political cure offered. In other words, Gaullism is not presented solely as another theory of the good society, but also as the only immediate and feasible way out of a desperate situation.

The desperate situation is simply that the Russian drive for world power is sweeping across the entire European continent, enslaving the populations of the occupied areas, and threatening to disintegrate the political and intellectual life of those countries as yet out of the reach of the Red Army. Hence the main political and human problem today is how to stop the advance of Stalinism, without losing sight of our radical goals. And insofar as Malraux and Burnham may be said to share this general aim, we are in agreement with them.

Frankly, we have little patience with those bohemian radicals who are more concerned with making a show of their purity and intransigence than with formulating a serious opposition to Stalinism.

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They constantly remind us that there are other reactionary forces in the world today, and that we cannot take sides in the clash between America, England, and perhaps France on one side, and Russia on the other, because the capitalist imperialism of the Western nations is just as bad as the Communist imperialism of the Soviet Union. This seems to us pointless and disingenuous. One doesn't have to be a profound theoretician to observe that this is simply not true: in the United States and the Western democracies what we have to cope with are the traditional forces of reaction that are not at the moment any stronger than they have been in the past. In general, the political situation on the anti-Stalinist side of the fence is fluid and unpredictable. Stalinism, on the other hand, means absolute terror and dictatorship, and confronts us with the question of sheer survival of the most elementary freedoms and human values. If anyone seriously believes that Stalinism and the status quo of democratic capitalism are equally bad, then he must conclude the situation is utterly hopeless and begin to investigate the various means of committing suicide.

Actually, no one believes this. And those liberals and radicals who profess to do so are simply engaging in a form of moral self-indulgence, for they are gambling on an American victory in a war with Russia, which will preserve for them all the existing freedoms including the freedom to remain politically uncontaminated. While these utopians are waiting for the best society, Stalin forces upon the world the worst society, the police state. Then there are those intellectuals who claim exemption from the practical struggle against Stalinism, on the ground that this is not their task, their task presumably being to brood about absolute moral and political values. But this too is a luxury for American intellectuals, who have been able to depend on the strength and prosperity of the United States to keep intact their present way of life while they occupy themselves with eternal questions. As for the form of political confusion that goes by the name of liberalism today, its devotion to peace at all costs, its harping on every injustice within the democratic orbit while rationalizing the aggressions of Russia, its chiding of the United States for finding fault with and provoking the Stalinist regime—it is all either a political perversion or a disguised and blundering form of Stalinism, or both.

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Hence we share Malraux's belief that the situation is so far gone that only bold and decisive action can save Europe from the grasp of Stalin. And we are prepared to support, if necessary, any force opposed not only to Stalinism but to all forms of totalitarianism. As we have pointed out before, this position in no way violates any socialist or democratic tradition: it is merely in contradiction with some impulse to self-destruction posing as political rectitude in the Trotskyist sect and as moral rectitude in the anarchist sect. The alternatives of the third political camp and the third moral camp, which have been dangled before us all these years while Stalin kept adding to his collection of both the living and dead, can be regarded at this point only as political or moral rituals of self-deception. (Why the magical number 3? Why not the fourth, fifth, or sixth camp?) And if these slogans have any objective effect at all, they probably do less to stop Stalinism than to keep anti-Stalinist opinion in a state of hopeless division.

Let us face the unpleasant fact that the political situation is a truly desperate one, and that all the old liberal and socialist panaceas are nothing more than face-saving gestures now. Those of us who complain about the conservative forces that have emerged in opposition to Stalinism in France, Italy, and the United States, and self-righteously disavow both sides, should recognize that this is precisely the extreme situation in which Europe has been placed. The truth is that the radical organizations on their own have shown themselves incapable of coping with either the Communist Party, the MVD, or the Red Army. For it is the very power of the Communists that paralyzes the middle groupings as well as the anti-Stalinist left, and creates its opposite in the form of some new conservative force. Obviously, were it not for the Stalinist threat, clericalism in Italy would have to restrict itself mostly to considerations of immortality while De Gaulle's political career would probably have ended with the Resistance.

Such, it seems to me, is the background against which we must see the rise of De Gaulle and the flocking to his banner of such figures as Malraux. For, as Malraux argues, the support of De Gaulle may become the only alternative to Stalinism in France, since the "Third Force," as represented by the Schuman government, is powerless to resist the attacks of the Communists. Whether this is true or not, we are frankly not in a position to say. Perhaps some other antitotal-

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itarian groupings strong enough to play a political role will emerge. But in principle it might be stated that French radicals should be able to ally themselves with any anti-Stalinist movement however conservative or bourgeois its leanings are, so long as it is committed at least to the prevailing forms of democracy.

Clearly, then, the question of supporting in France any such figure as De Gaulle is one of *expediency,* being largely a matter of weighing the threat of Stalinism against the political risks of Gaullism. But this is a far cry from accepting the Gaullist movement as an end in itself. And when Malraux goes overboard, hailing De Gaulle as the savior of France and the guiding spirit behind a revitalized Europe, he has committed himself to a new social philosophy and perhaps a new social order. He has in fact broken completely with all socialist and radical traditions.

What is this new social philosophy? Frankly Malraux's presentation is extremely vague—suspiciously so. On the whole it is a great tour de force, dramatizing the decay of Europe, and carried along by a rhetoric of spiritual and political rejuvenation. But most of the crucial questions are deftly sidestepped, or buried in some invocation to history.

When, for example, Malraux is asked about the program of De Gaulle, he answers that it has objectives rather than programs. A purely semantic distinction. But let us not quibble—what are its objectives? The objectives cited by Malraux turn out to be marginal, and, besides, according to Malraux, they have already been realized. We should have liked to have Malraux tell us about the position of De Gaulle on the nature of capitalism and the kind of economy he envisages for France, on the relation of classes, the form of democracy he would preserve or institute, and, above all, the means he would use to enforce his rule. We should like to know, too, whether De Gaulle aims to take power in the name of a single party or to maintain a multiparty government. Yet all that Malraux has to say about these questions comes down to a few marginal references and innuendos, as when he remarks that democracy has to be fought for, which is just about as illuminating as the statement that the good society must be striven for. At various points, however, Malraux seems to imply that politically and economically much of the status quo will be retained, except, of course, that it will be administered by the iron

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but benevolent hand of De Gaulle. In discussing, for instance, a European federation, Malraux seems to take for granted that the African colonies would remain part of the existing empires. Similarly there are several indications that Gaullism is entirely compatible with the present form of capitalism and the profit system.

What is most disturbing, however, is Malraux's high-pitched nationalism and Messianism, so reminiscent of the mass movements of the right before the last war. Thus Malraux insists that politics, unlike culture, is national. And at one point Malraux actually says, "In every country, resistance to Communism takes on the color given it by the practical spirit of that country. In Germany, it was Nazism; and with us it is something which looks like the First Republic." Perhaps we should not push the association too far. But this much we have learned from the past: that the most dangerous movements of the right set out to freeze the existing social order and make their appeal by dedicating themselves to authority, the nation, and the leader. And all these elements, while not presented in full dress by Malraux, still may be seen lurking behind his humanist rhetoric. Thus, while not coming out openly for an authoritarian government, Malraux does speak rather contemptuously of the parliamentary system, as when he contrasts De Gaulle's "decisiveness" with the "talent for trading" of the parliamentarians, whom he dismisses as a "party of logrollers." As for the leader, Malraux's image of De Gaulle is not that of a political man but of a spiritual force—the ghost of Joan of Arc in the uniform of the general. He is the incarnation of French destiny: and one is led to believe that the similarity between his name and that of France itself is more than a verbal accident.

So far, on the evidence presented by Malraux, we see no reason why any liberal or radical movement should ally itself with Gaullism. Perhaps the situation in France is such that there may soon be no other alternative to Communism but De Gaulle. On this eventuality we must reserve judgment. But on the scale of world politics, it is already clear, even from Malraux's eloquent statement, that Gaullism is at present nothing more than a French phenomenon, with about as much meaning for us as Ukrainian or Polish nationalism. True enough, various nationalist forces are bound to ally themselves against the imperialism of the Soviet regime, and, like the liberation move-

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ments that fought Hitler, become part of the anti-Stalinist camp. But insofar as we are concerned with their social philosophies, we can be interested only in those movements that are truly international and speak for all peoples.

Because our perspective is that of democratic socialism we cannot accept Malraux's uncritical support of a movement that may turn out to be another variety of authoritarianism. And if we are ready to join in the defense of what still remains of Western civilization, it is because we are convinced that the ideals of socialism cannot be realized so long as Stalinism dominates the political life of Europe.

William Phillips

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John Berryman

NEW YEAR'S EVE

The grey girl who had not been singing stopped,
And a brave new no-sound blew through acrid air.
I set my drink down, hard. Somebody slapped
Somebody's second wife somewhere,
Wheeling away to long to be alone.
I see the dragon of years is almost done,
Its claws loosen, its eyes
Crust now with tears & lust and a scale of lies.

A whisky-listless and excessive saint
Was expounding his position, whom I hung
Boy-glad in glowing heaven—he grows faint—
Hearing what song the sirens sung,
Sidelong he web-slid and some rich prose spun.
The tissue golden of the gifts undone
Surpassed the gifts. Miss Weirs
Whispers to me her international fears.

Intelligentsia milling. In a semi-German
(Our loss of Latin fractured how far our fate——
Disinterested once, linkage once like a sermon)
I struggle to articulate
Why it is our promise breaks in pieces early.
The Muses' visitants come soon, go surly
With liquor & mirrors away
In this land wealthy & casual as a holiday.

Whom the Bitch winks at. Most of us are linsey-woolsey workmen, grandiose, and slack.

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ZURICH (1947) by William deKooning. Oil on paper. 24" x 36".
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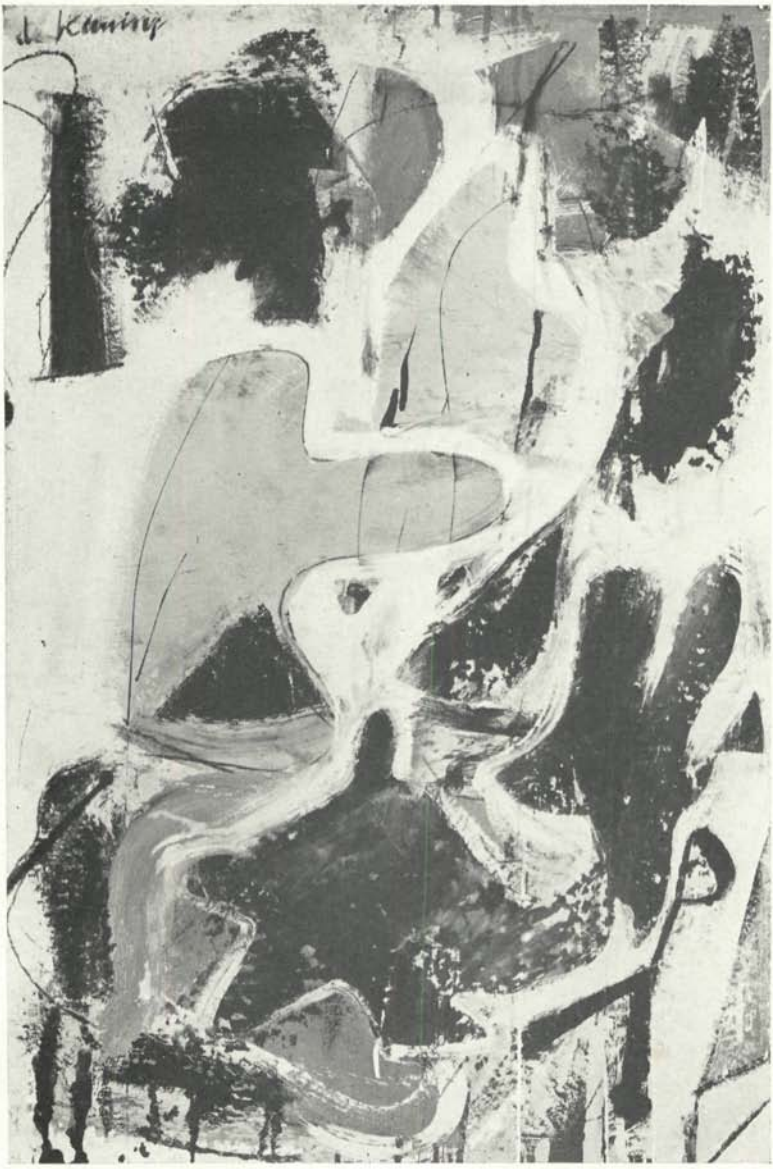

VALENTINE (1947) by William deKooning. Oil on paper. 24" x 36".
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On m'analyse, the key to secrets. Kinsey
Shortly will tell us sharply back
Habits we stuttered. How revive to join
(Great evils grieve beneath : eye Caesar's coin)
And lure a while more home
The vivid wanderers, uneasy with our shame?

Priests of the infinite! ah, not for long.
The dove whispers, and diminishes
Up the blue leagues. And no doubt we heard wrong—
Wax of our lives collects & dulls; but was
What we heard hurried as we memorized,
Or brightened, or adjusted? Undisguised
We pray our tongues & fingers
Record the strange word that blows suddenly and lingers.

Imagine a patience in the works of love
Luck sometimes visits. Ages we have sighed,
And cleave more sternly to a music of
Even this sore word "genocide."
Each to his own! Clockless & thankless dream
And labor makers, being what we seem.
Soon, soon enough we turn
Our tools in; brownshirt Time chiefly our works will burn.

I remember: white fine flour everywhere whirled
Ceaselessly, wheels rolled, a slow thunder boomed,
And there were snowy men in the mill-world
With sparkling eyes, light hair uncombed,
And one of them was humming an old song,
Sack upon sack grew portly, until strong
Arms moved them on, by pairs,
And then the bell clanged and they ran like hares.

Scotch in his oxter, my Retarded One
Blows in before the midnight; freezing slush
Stamps off, off. Worst of years! . . . no matter, begone;
Your slash and spells (in the sudden hush)

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We see now we had to suffer some day, so
I cross the dragon with a blessing, low,
While the black blood slows. Clockwise,
We clasp upon the stroke, kissing with happy cries.

Of 1947

NARCISSUS MOVING

Noise of the vans woke us before we would
At the second landing a fine mirror cracked
Scratches appeared on all the valued wood
And this was the Fairway's last official act

Unfit to form attachment he is flying
The weather favors jokers of this kind
News of the hairy cousins was supplying
Barkers with gossip not to speak his mind

Blond to the dawn comes down himself in green
Verging on joy I see his knuckles white
With joy and yet he stood all night unseen
In reverie upstairs under the skylight

The neglected corners said what they were for
"Limpid the lapse & sweet relapse of water
Upon my trembling image ah, no more"
He whispered and stole downstairs to the slaughter

With a banister he laid a blue bone bare

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A tongue tore hard but one boot in a groin
Sank like a drift A double fist of hair
Like feathers members that will not rejoin

Flat slams below there but I blew my drag
Against my ash and strained, ash on the tile
Spoilt the good washroom, weary with a jag
I chinned the sill to watch a wicked mile

The walls of stone bury to some pavane
The garden A bloody rubbish a dancing shoe
"Two-Eyes could bear no more" like the dusty swan
Shut of its cage and doubtful what to do

A vile tune from the shattered radio
Incredibly arises & dies at once . . .
A deeper silence, then we slowly know
Somewhere in the empty mansion one tap runs

"A Negress gnawed my lip up a terrible place
Why not? the rising sun will light me poor"
Only upon a young man's most blond face
Une silence de la mort de l'amour

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Lionel Trilling

SEX AND SCIENCE: THE KINSEY REPORT

By virtue both of its intrinsic nature and its dramatic reception, the Kinsey Report, as it has come to be called, is an event of great importance in our culture.[1] As such an event it is significant in two separate ways, as symptom and as therapy. The therapy lies in the large permissive effect the Report is likely to have, the long way it goes toward establishing the *community* of sexuality. The symptomatic significance lies in the fact that the Report was felt to be needed at all, that the community of sexuality requires now to be established in explicit quantitative terms. Nothing shows more clearly the extent to which modern society has atomized itself than the sexual isolation in ignorance which exists among us. We have censored the folk knowledge of the most primal things and have systematically dried up the social affections which might naturally seek to enlighten and release. Many cultures, the most primitive and the most complex, have entertained sexual fears of an irrational sort, but probably our culture is unique in strictly isolating the individual in the fears that society has devised. Now, having become somewhat aware of what we have perpetrated at great cost and with little gain, we must assure ourselves by statistical science that the solitude is imaginary. The Report will surprise one part of the population with some facts and another part with other facts, but really all that it says to society as a whole is that there is an almost universal involvement in the sexual life and therefore much variety of conduct. This was taken for granted in any comedy that Aristophanes put on the stage.

There is a further diagnostic significance to be found in the fact that our society makes this effort of self-enlightenment through

[1] *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male.* By Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. Saunders. $6.50.

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the agency of science. Sex is inextricably involved with morality, and hitherto it has been dealt with by those representatives of our cultural imagination that have been committed to morality—it has been dealt with by religion, ethical philosophy, and literature. But now science seems to be the only one of our institutions which has the authority to speak decisively on the matter. Nothing in the Report is more suggestive in a large cultural way than the insistent claims it makes for its strictly scientific nature, its announcement of divorce from all questions of morality at the same time that it patently intends a moral effect. Nor will any science do for the job—it must be a science as simple and materialistic as the subject can possibly permit. It must be a science of statistics and not of ideas. The way for the Report was prepared by Freud, but Freud, in all the years of his activity, never had the currency or authority with the public that the Report has achieved in a matter of weeks.

The scientific nature of the Report must be taken in conjunction with the manner of its publication. The Report says of itself that it is only a "preliminary survey," a work intended to be the first step in a larger research; that it is nothing more than an "accumulation of scientific fact," a collection of "objective data," a "report on what people do, which raises no question of what they should do," and it is fitted out with a full complement of charts, tables, and discussions of scientific method. A work conceived and executed in this way is usually presented only to an audience of professional scientists; and the publishers of the Report, a medical house, pay their ritual respects to the old tradition which held that not all medical or quasi-medical knowledge was to be made easily available to the general lay reader, or at least not until it had been subjected to professional debate; they tell us in a foreword for what limited professional audience the book was primarily intended—physicians, biologists and social scientists and "teachers, social workers, personnel officers, law enforcement groups and others concerned with the direction of human behavior." And yet the book has been so successfully publicized that at the present writing it stands fourth on the national non-fiction best-seller list.

This way of bringing out a technical work of science is a cultural phenomenon that ought not to pass without some question. The public which receives this technical report, this merely preliminary

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survey, this accumulation of data, has never, even on its upper educational levels, been properly instructed in the most elementary principles of scientific thought. With this public, science is authority. It has been trained to accept heedlessly "what science says," which it conceives to be a unitary utterance. To this public nothing is more valuable, more precisely "scientific" and more finally convincing, than raw data without conclusions; no disclaimer of conclusiveness can mean anything to it—it has learned that the disclaimer is simply the hallmark of the scientific attitude, science's way of saying "thy unworthy servant."

So that if the Report were really, as it claims to be, only an accumulation of objective data, there would be some question of the cultural wisdom of dropping it in a lump on the general public. But in point of fact, it is full of assumption and conclusion; it makes very positive statements on highly debatable matters and it editorializes very freely. This preliminary survey gives some very conclusive suggestions to a public that is quick to obey what science says, no matter how contradictory science may be, which is most contradictory indeed. This is the public that, on scientific advice, ate spinach in one generation and avoided it in the next, that in one decade trained its babies to rigid Watsonian schedules and believed that affection corrupted the infant character, only to learn in the next decade that rigid discipline was harmful and that cuddling was as scientific as induction.

Then there is the question of whether the Report does not do harm by encouraging people in their commitment to mechanical attitudes toward life. The tendency to divorce sex from the other manifestations of life is already a strong one. This truly absorbing study of sex in charts and tables, in data and quantities, may have the effect of strengthening the tendency still more with people who are by no means trained to invert the process of abstraction and to put the fact back into the general life from which it has been taken. And the likely mechanical implications of a statistical study are in this case supported by certain fully formulated attitudes which the authors strongly hold.

These, I believe, are valid objections to the book's indiscriminate circulation. And yet I also believe that there is something good about the manner of publication, something honest and right. Every

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complex society has its agencies which are "concerned with the direction of human behavior," but we today are developing a new element in that old activity, the element of scientific knowledge. Whatever the Report claims for itself, the social sciences in general no longer insist that they merely describe what people do; they now have the clear consciousness of their power to manipulate and adjust. First for industry and then for government, sociology has shown its instrumental nature. A government which makes use of social knowledge still suggests benignity; and in an age that daily brings the proliferation of government by police methods it may suggest the very spirit of rational liberalism. Yet at least one sociologist has expressed the fear that sociology may become the instrument of a bland tyranny—it is the same fear that Dostoevsky gave immortal expression to in "The Grand Inquisitor." And indeed there is something repulsive in the idea of men being studied for their own good. The paradigm of what repels us is to be found in the common situation of the child who is *understood* by its parents, hemmed in, anticipated and lovingly circumscribed, thoroughly taped, finding it easier and easier to conform internally and in the future to the parents' own interpretation of the external acts of the past, and so, yielding to understanding as never to coercion, does not develop the mystery and wildness of spirit which it is still our grace to believe is the mark of full humanness. The act of understanding becomes an act of control.

If, then, we are to live under the aspect of sociology, let us at least all be sociologists together—let us broadcast what every sociologist knows, and let us all have a share in observing each other. The general indiscriminate publication of the Report makes sociology a little less the study of many men by a few men and a little more man's study of himself. There is something right in turning loose the Report on the American public—it turns the American public loose on the Report. It is right that the Report should be sold in stores that never before sold books and bought by people who never before bought books, and passed from hand to hand and talked about and also snickered at and giggled over and generally submitted to humor: American popular culture has surely been made the richer by the Report's gift of a new folk hero—he already is clearly the hero of the Report—the "scholarly and skilled lawyer" who for

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thirty years has had an orgasmic frequency of thirty times a week.

As for the objection to the involvement of sex with science, it may be said that if science, through the Report, serves in any way to free the physical and even the "mechanical" aspects of sex, it may by that much have acted to free the emotions it might seem to deny. And perhaps only science could effectively undertake the task of freeing sexuality from science itself. Nothing has so reinforced moralistic or religious prohibitions as the concepts of science. At some point in the history of Europe, some time in the Reformation, masturbation ceased to be thought of as merely a sexual sin which could be dealt with like any other sexual sin and, perhaps by analogy with the venereal diseases with which the sexual mind of Europe was obsessed, came to be thought of as the specific cause of mental and physical disease, of madness and decay.[2] The prudery of Victorian England went forward with scientific hygiene; and both in Europe and in America the sexual mind was haunted by the idea of *degeneration,* apparently by analogy with the second law of thermodynamics—here is enlightened liberal opinion in 1896: "The effects of venereal disease have been treated at length, but the amount of vitality burned out through lust has never been and, perhaps, never can be adequately measured" (Article "Degeneration" in *The Encyclopedia of Social Reform*). The very word *sex,* which we now utter so casually, came into use for scientific reasons, to replace *love,* which had once been indiscriminately used but was now to be saved for ideal purposes, and *lust,* which came to seem both too pejorative and too human: *sex* implied scientific neutrality, then vague devaluation, for the word which neutralizes the mind of the observer also neuterizes the men and women who are being observed. Perhaps the Report is the superfetation of neutrality and objectivity which, in the dialectic of culture, was needed before sex could be free of their cold dominion.

Certainly it is a great merit of the Report that it brings to mind the earliest and best commerce between sex and science—the best thing about the Report is the quality that makes us remember Lucretius. The dialectic of culture has its jokes, and *alma Venus* having once been called to preside protectively over science, the

[2] See Abram Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society,* p. 32 and p. 441 n.

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situation is now reversed. The Venus of the Report does not, like the Venus of *De Rerum Natura,* shine in the light of the heavenly signs, nor does the earth put forth flowers for her. She is rather fusty and hole-in-the-corner and no doubt it does not help her charm to speak of her in terms of mean frequencies of 3.2. No *putti* attend her: although Dr. Gregg in his Preface refers to sex as the reproductive instinct, there is scarcely any further indication in the book that sex has any connection with propagation. Yet clearly all things still follow where she leads, and somewhere in the authors' assumptions is buried the genial belief that still without her "nothing comes forth into the shining borders of light, nothing joyous and lovely is made." Her pandemic quality is still here—it is one of the great points of the Report how much of every kind of desire there is, how early it begins, how late it lasts. Her well-known jealousy is not abated, and prodigality is still her characteristic virtue: the Report assures us that those who respond to her earliest continue latest. The Lucretian flocks and herds are here too. Professor Kinsey is a zoologist and he keeps us always in mind of our animal kinship, although he draws some very illogical conclusions from it; and those who are honest will have to admit that their old repulsion by the idea of human-animal contacts is somewhat abated by the chapter on this subject, which is, oddly, the tenderest chapter in the book. This large, recognizing, Lucretian sweep of the Report is the best thing about it and it makes up for much that is deficient and confused in its ideas.

But the Report is something more than a public and symbolic act of cultural revision in which, while the Heavenly Twins brood benignly over the scene in the form of the National Research Council and the Rockefeller Foundation, Professor Kinsey and his coadjutors drag forth into the light all the hidden actualities of sex so that they may lose their dark power and become domesticated among us. It is also an early example of science undertaking to deal head-on with a uniquely difficult matter that has traditionally been involved in valuation and morality. We must ask the question very seriously, How does science conduct itself in such an enterprise?

Certainly it does not conduct itself the way its says it does. I have already suggested that the Report overrates its own objectivity. The authors, who are enthusiastically committed to their method and

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to their principles, make the mistake of believing that, being scientists, they do not deal in assumptions, preferences, and conclusions. Nothing comes more easily to their pens than the criticism of the subjectivity of earlier writers on sex, yet their own subjectivity is sometimes extreme. In the nature of the enterprise, a degree of subjectivity was inevitable. Intellectual safety would then seem to lie not in increasing the number of mechanical checks or in more rigorously examining those assumptions which had been brought to conscious formulation, but rather in straightforwardly admitting that subjectivity was bound to appear and inviting the reader to be on the watch for it. This would not have guaranteed an absolute objectivity, but it would have made for a higher degree of relative objectivity. It would have done a thing even more important—it would have taught the readers of the Report something about the scientific processes to which they submit their thought.

The first failure of objectivity occurs in the title of the Report, *The Sexual Behavior of the Human Male.* That the behavior which is studied is not that of the human male but only that of certain North American males has no doubt been generally observed and does not need further comment.[3] But the intention of the word *behavior* requires notice. By *behavior* the Report means behavioristic behavior, only that behavior which is physical. "To a large degree the present study has been confined to securing a record of the individual's overt sexual experiences." This limitation is perhaps forced on the authors by considerations of method, because it will yield simpler data and more manageable statistics; but it is also a limitation which suits their notion of reality and its effect is to be seen throughout the book.

The Report, then, is a study of sexual behavior insofar as it can be quantitatively measured. This is certainly very useful. But, as we might fear, the sexuality that is measured is taken to be the definition of sexuality itself. The authors are certainly not without interest in what they call attitudes but they believe that attitudes are best shown by "overt sexual experiences." We want to know, of course, what they mean by an experience and we want to know by

[3] The statistical method of the report lies, necessarily, outside my purview. Nor am I able to assess with any confidence the validity of the interviewing methods that were employed.

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what principles of evidence they draw their conclusions about attitudes.

We are led to see that their whole definition of a sexual experience is comprised by the physical act and that their principles of evidence are entirely quantitative. Quality is not integral to what they mean by experience. As I have suggested, the Report is partisan with sex, it wants people to have a good sexuality. But by good it means nothing else but frequent. "It seems safe to assume that daily orgasm would be within the capacity of the average human male and that the more than daily rates which have been observed for some primate species could be matched by a large portion of the human population if sexual activity were unrestricted." The Report never suggests that a sexual experience is anything but the discharge of specifically sexual tension and therefore seems to conclude that frequency is always the sign of a robust sexuality. Yet masturbation in children may be and often is the expression not of sexuality only, but of anxiety. In the same way, adult intercourse may be the expression of anxiety, its frequency may not be so much robust as compulsive.

The Report is by no means unaware of the psychic conditions of sexuality, yet it uses the concept almost always under the influence of its quantitative assumption. In a summary passage (p. 159) it describes the different intensities of orgasm and the various degrees of satisfaction, but disclaims any intention of taking these variations into account in its record of behavior. The Report holds out the hope to respectable males that they might be as frequent in performance as underworld characters if they were as unrestrained as this group. But before the respectable males aspire to this unwonted freedom they had better ascertain in how far the underworld characters are ridden by anxiety and in how far their sexuality is to be correlated with other ways of dealing with anxiety, such as dope, and in how far it is actually enjoyable. The Report's own data suggest that there may be no direct connection between, on the one hand, lack of restraint and frequency, and, on the other hand, psychic health; they tell us of men in the lower social levels who in their sexual careers have intercourse with many hundreds of girls but who despise their sexual partners and cannot endure relations with the same girl more than once.

But the Report, as we shall see, is most resistant to the possibility

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of making any connection between the sexual life and the psychic structure. This strongly formulated attitude of the Report is based on the assumption that the real reality of sex is anatomical and physiological; the emotions are dealt with very much as if they were a "superstructure." "The subject's awareness of the [erotic] situation is summed up by this statement that he is 'emotionally' aroused; but the material sources of the emotional disturbance are rarely recognized, either by laymen or scientists, both of whom are inclined to think in terms of passion, or natural drive, or a libido, which partakes of the mystic[4] more than it does of solid anatomy and physiologic function." Now there is of course a clear instrumental advantage in being able to talk about psychic or emotional phenomena in terms of physiology, but to make a disjunction between the two descriptions of the same event, to make the anatomical and physiological description the "source" of the emotional and then to consider it as the more real of the two is simply to commit not only the Reductive Fallacy but also what William James called the Psychologist's Fallacy. It must bring under suspicion any subsequent generalization which the Report makes about the nature of sexuality.[5]

The emphasis on the anatomical and physiologic nature of sexuality is connected with the Report's strong reliance on animal be-

[4] We must observe how the scientific scorn of the "mystic" quite abates when the "mystic" suits the scientist's purpose. The Report is explaining why the interviews were not checked by means of narcosynthesis, lie-detectors, etc.: "In any such study which needs to secure quantities of data from human subjects, there is no way except to win their voluntary cooperation through the establishment of that intangible thing known as rapport." This intangible thing is established by looking the respondent squarely in the eye. It might be asked why a thing which is intangible but real enough to assure scientific accuracy should not be real enough to be considered as having an effect in sexual behavior.

[5] The implications of the Reductive Fallacy may be seen by means of a paraphrase of the sentence: "Professor Kinsey's awareness of the [intellectual] situation is summed up by his statement that he 'has had an idea' or 'has come to a conclusion'; but the material sources of his intellectual disturbances are rarely recognized, either by laymen or scientists, both of whom are inclined to think in terms of 'thought' or 'intellection' or 'cognition', which partakes of the mystic more than it does of solid anatomy or physiologic function." The Psychologist's Fallacy is what James calls "the confusion of his own standpoint with that of the mental fact about which he is making a report." "Another variety of the psychologist's fallacy is the assumption that the mental fact studied must be conscious of itself as the psychologist is conscious of it." *Principles of Psychology,* vol. I, pp. 196-7.

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havior as a norm. The italics in the following quotation are mine. "*For those who like the term* it is clear that there is a sexual drive which cannot be set aside for any large portion of the population, by any sort of social convention. *For those who prefer to think in simpler terms of action and reaction,* it is a picture of an animal who, however civilized or cultured, continues to respond to the constantly present sexual stimuli, albeit with some social and physical restraints." The Report obviously finds the second formulation to be superior to the first.

Now there are several advantages in keeping in mind our own animal nature and our family connection with the other animals. The advantages are instrumental, moral, and poetic—I use the last word for want of a better to suggest the mere pleasure in finding kinship with some of the animals. But perhaps no idea is more difficult to use than this one. In the Report it is used to establish a dominating principle of judgment, which is the Natural. As a concept of judgment this is notoriously deceptive and has been belabored for generations, but the Report knows nothing of its dangerous reputation and uses it with the naivest confidence. And although the Report directs the harshest language toward the idea of the Normal, saying that it has stood in the way of any true scientific knowledge of sex, it is itself by no means averse to letting the idea of the Natural develop quietly into the idea of the Normal. The Report has in mind both a physical normality—as suggested by its belief that under optimal conditions men should be able to achieve the orgasmic frequency of the primates—and a moral normality, the acceptability, on the authority of animal behavior, of certain usually taboo practices.

It is inevitable that the concept of the Natural should haunt any discussion of sex. It is inevitable that it should make trouble, but most of all for a scientific discussion that bars judgments of value. Thus, in order to show that homosexuality is not a neurotic manifestation, as the Freudians say it is, the Report adduces the homosexual behavior of rats. But the argument *de animalibus* must surely stand by its ability to be inverted and extended. Thus, in having lost sexual periodicity, has the human animal lost naturalness? Again, the female mink, we learn, fiercely resists intercourse and must be actually coerced into submission. Is it she who is unnatural or is her

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defense of her chastity to be taken as a comment on the females, animal or human, who willingly submit or who merely play at escape? Professor Kinsey is like no one so much as Sir Percival in Malory who, seeing a lion and a serpent in battle with each other, decided to help the lion, "for he was the more natural beast of the two."

This awkwardness in the handling of ideas is characteristic of the Report. It is ill at ease with any idea that is in the least complex and it often tries to get rid of such an idea in favor of another that has the appearance of not going beyond the statement of physical fact. We see this especially in the handling of certain Freudian ideas. The Report acknowledges its debt to Freud with the generosity of spirit that marks it in other connections and it often makes use of Freudian concepts in a very direct and sensible way. Yet nothing could be clumsier than its handling of Freud's idea of pre-genital generalized infantile sexuality. Because the Report can show, what is interesting and significant, that infants are capable of actual orgasm, although without ejaculation, it concludes that infantile sexuality is not generalized but specifically genital. But actually it has long been known, though the fact of orgasm had not been established, that infants can respond erotically to direct genital stimulation; and this knowledge does not contradict the Freudian idea that there is a stage in infant development in which sexuality is generalized throughout the body rather than specifically centered in the genital area—the fact of infant orgasm must be interpreted in conjunction with other and more complex manifestations of infant sexuality.[6]

The Report, we may say, has an extravagant fear of all ideas that do not seem to it to be, as it were, immediately dictated by simple physical fact. Another way of saying this is that the Report is resistant to any idea that seems to refer to a specifically human situation. An example is the position it takes on the matter of male potency. The folk feeling, where it is formulated on the question, and certainly where it is formulated by women, holds that male potency is not to be measured, as the Report measures it, merely by frequency, but by the ability to withhold orgasm long enough to

[6] The Report also handles the idea of sublimation in a very clumsy way. It does not represent accurately what the Freudian theory of sublimation is. For this, however, there is some excuse in the change of emphasis and even of meaning in Freud's use of the word.

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bring the woman to climax. This is also the psychoanalytic view, which holds further that the inability to sustain intercourse is the result of unconscious fear. This view is very strongly controverted by the Report. The denial is based on mammalian behavior—"in many species" (but not in all?) ejaculation follows almost immediately upon intromission; in chimpanzees ejaculation occurs in ten to twenty seconds. The Report therefore concludes that the human male who ejaculates immediately upon intromission "is quite normal [here the word becomes suddenly permissible] among mammals and usual among his own species." Indeed, the Report finds it odd that the term "impotent" should be applied to such rapid responses. "It would be difficult to find another situation in which an individual who was quick and intense in his responses was labeled anything but superior, and that in most instances is exactly what the rapidly ejaculating male probably is, however inconvenient and unfortunate his qualities may be from the standpoint of the wife in the relationship."

But by such reasoning the human male who is quick and intense in his leap to the lifeboat is natural and superior, however inconvenient and unfortunate his speed and intensity may be to the wife he leaves standing on the deck, as is also the man who makes a snap judgment, who bites his dentist's finger, who kicks the child who annoys him, who bolts his—or another's—food, who is incontinent of his feces. Surely the problem of the natural in the human was solved four centuries ago by Rabelais, and in the simplest naturalistic terms; and it is sad to have the issue all confused again by the naivety of men of science. Rabelais' solution lay in the simple perception of the *natural* ability and tendency of man to grow in the direction of organization and control. The young Gargantua in his natural infancy had all the quick and intense responses just enumerated; had his teachers confused the traits of his natural infancy with those of his natural manhood, he would not have been the more natural but the less; he would have been a monster.

In considering the Report as a major cultural document, we must not underestimate the significance of its petulant protest against the inconvenience to the male of the unjust demand that is made upon him. This protest is tantamount to saying that sexuality is not to be involved in specifically human situations or to be connected with

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desirable aims that are conceived of in specifically human terms. We may leave out of account any ideal reasons which would lead a man to solve the human situation of the discrepancy—arising from conditions of biology or of culture or of both—between his own orgasmic speed and that of his mate, and we can consider only that it might be hedonistically desirable for him to do so, for advantages presumably accrue to him in the woman's accessibility and responsiveness. Advantages of this kind, however, are precisely the matters of quality in experience that the Report does not consider.[7]

And its attitude on the question of male potency is but one example of the Report's insistence on drawing sexuality apart from the general human context. It is striking how small a role woman plays in *The Sexual Behavior of the Human Male*. We learn nothing about the connection of sex and reproduction; the connection, from the sexual point of view, is certainly not constant yet it is of great interest. The pregnancy or possibility of pregnancy of his mate has a considerable effect, sometimes one way, sometimes the other, on the sexual behavior of the male; yet the index gives but one entry under *Pregnancy—"fear of."* Again, the contraceptive devices which *Pregnancy, fear of* requires have a notable influence on male sexuality; but the index lists only *Contraception, techniques.* Or again, menstruation has an elaborate mythos which men take very seriously; but the two indexed passages which refer to menstruation give no information about its relation to sexual conduct.

Then too the Report explicitly and stubbornly resists the idea that sexual behavior is involved with the whole of the individual's character. In this it is strangely inconsistent. In the conclusion of its chapter on masturbation, after saying that masturbation does no physical harm and, if there are no conflicts, no mental harm, it goes on to raise the question of the effect of adult masturbation on the ultimate personality of the individual. With a certain confusion of cause and effect which we need not dwell on, it says: "It is now clear that masturbation is relied upon by the upper [social] level

[7] It is hard not to make a connection between the Report's strong stand against any delay in the male orgasm and its equally strong insistence that there is no difference for the woman between a clitoral and vaginal orgasm, a view which surely needs more investigation before it is as flatly put as the Report puts it. The conjunction of the two ideas suggests the desirability of a sexuality which uses a minimum of sexual apparatus.

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primarily because it has insufficient outlet through heterosexual coitus. This is, to a degree, an escape from reality, and the effect upon the ultimate personality of the individual is something that needs consideration." The question is of course a real one, yet the Report strenuously refuses to extend the principle of it to any other sexual activity. It summarily rejects the conclusions of psychoanalysis which make the sexual conduct an important clue to, even the crux of, character. It finds the psychoanalytical view unacceptable for two reasons: (1) The psychiatric practitioner misconceives the relation between sexual aberrancy and psychic illness because only those sexually aberrant people who are ill seek out the practitioner, who never learns about the large incidence of health among the aberrant. (2) The emotional illness which sends the sexually aberrant person to find psychiatric help is the result of no flaw in the psyche itself that is connected with the aberrancy, but is only the result of the fear of social disapproval of his sexual conduct. And the Report instances the many men who are well adjusted socially and who yet show, among them, the whole range of taboo conduct.

The quality of the argument which the Report advances is as significant as the wrong conclusions it reaches. "It is not possible," the Report says, "to insist that any departure from the sexual mores, or any participation in socially taboo activities, always, or even usually, involves a neurosis or psychosis, for the case histories abundantly demonstrate that most individuals who engage in taboo activities make satisfactory social adjustments." In this context either "neuroses and psychoses" are too loosely used to stand for all psychic maladjustment, or "social adjustment" is too loosely used to stand for emotional peace and psychic stability. When the Report goes on to cite the "socially and intellectually significant persons," the "successful scientists, educators, physicians," etc., who have among them "accepted the whole range of the so-called abnormalities," we must keep in mind that very intense emotional disturbance, known only to the sufferer, can go along with the efficient discharge of social duties; and that the psychoanalyst could counter with as long a list of distinguished and efficient people who consult him.

Then no one except a straw man would insist that *any* departure from sexual mores, or *any* participation in sexually taboo activities, involves a neurosis or a psychosis. It is just at this point that distinc-

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tions are needed of a sort which the Report seems not to want to make. For example: the Report comes out in a bold and simple way for the naturalness and normality and therefore the desirability of mouth-genital contacts in heterosexual love-making. This is a form of sexual expression which is officially taboo enough, yet to say that its practice indicated a neurosis or psychosis would be impossible to any psychoanalyst. But a person who disliked or was unable to practice any other form of contact would justify the conclusion that there was a neurotic streak in his psychic constitution. His social adjustment, in the rather crude terms which the Report conceives of it, might not be impaired, but certainly the chances are that his psychic life would show signs of disturbance, not from the practice itself but from the psychic needs which make him insist on it. It is not the breaking of the taboo but the emotional circumstance of the breaking of the taboo that is significant.

The Report handles in the same oversimplified way and with the same confusing use of absolute concepts the sexual aberrancy which is, I suppose, the most complex and the most important in our cultural life, homosexuality. It rejects the view that homosexuality is innate and that "no modification of it may be expected." But then it goes on also to reject the view that homosexuality provides evidence of a "psychopathic personality." "Psychopathic personality" is a very strong term which perhaps few analysts would wish to use in this connection. Perhaps even the term "neurotic" would be extreme in a discussion which takes "social adjustment," as indicated by status, to be the limit of its analysis of character. But this does not leave the discussion where the Report seems to want to leave it—at the idea that homosexuality is to be accepted as a form of sexuality like another and that it is as "natural" as heterosexuality, a judgment to which the Report is led in part because of the surprisingly large incidence of homosexuality it finds in the population. Nor does the practice of "an increasing proportion of the most skilled psychiatrists who make no attempt to re-direct behavior, but who devote their attention to helping an individual accept himself" imply what the Report seems to want it to, that these psychiatrists have thereby judged homosexuality to be an unexceptionable form of sexuality; it is rather that, in many cases, they are able to effect no change in the psychic disposition and therefore do the sen-

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sible and humane next best thing. Their opinion of the etiology of homosexuality as lying in some warp—as our culture judges it—of the psychic structure has not, I believe, changed. And I think that they would say that the condition that produced the homosexuality also produces other character traits on which judgment could be passed. This judgment need by no means be totally adverse; as passed upon individuals it need not be adverse at all; but there can be no doubt that a society in which homosexuality was dominant or even accepted would be different in the nature and quality of its life from a society in which homosexuality was censured.

The refusal of the Report to hold such a view leads us at this point to take into account what seem to be certain motives that animate the work. And when we do, we see how very characteristically American a document it is.

In speaking of its motives, I have in mind chiefly the impulse toward acceptance and liberation, the broad and generous desire for others not to be harshly judged. Much in the Report is to be understood as a recoil from the crude and often brutal rejection which society has made of the persons it calls aberrant. The Report has the intention of habituating its readers to the idea of sexuality in all its manifestations, to establish, as it were, a democratic pluralism of sexuality.

This good impulse shows itself very clearly in certain parts of our intellectual life, often in the more or less official parts. It is, for example, far more established in the universities than most of us, with our habits of criticism of America, particularly of American universities, easily admit. This generosity of mind is to be much admired, yet it is often associated with an almost willed intellectual weakness, with a preference for not making intellectual distinctions, perhaps out of fear that they may turn out to be social discriminations. Somehow the democratic virtues are inclined, in the intellectual life, to lead from the large acceptance of the facts of society to the belief that any use of these facts which perceives values and demonstrates consequences is dangerous.

One result of this set of mind is the worship of the factuality of the fact. There seem to be two criteria for factuality. One is the material physicality of the fact and its relative removal from idea

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and ideal, from complication and modification. The other is the numerical strength of the fact. As the first criterion is used in the Report it has the effect, ironic in a work that is so clearly directed to democratic values, of removing the human subject from its human implications. As the second criterion is used in the Report it has the effect, equally ironic in a democratic and instrumental document, of preventing the consideration of the consequences of certain forms of human conduct. The two criteria taken together have the effect of suggesting a most ineffectual standard of social behavior—that is, social behavior as it exists. Yet this is contradicted at any number of points and the Report is quite willing to judge among behaviors by various manipulations of its factual criteria. It is impossible to say of the Report that it does not bring light, and necessary to say of it that it spreads confusion.

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THEATER CHRONICLE

MODEST PROPOSALS

This review is dedicated to three repertory groups, the company headed by Richard Whorf and José Ferrer who put on *Volpone, Angel Street,* and a bill of four Chekhov comedies at the New York City Center, the Dublin Gate Theater, which brought a festival of Irish comedies to the Mansfield, and New Stages, Inc., which is performing Sartre's *The Respectful Prostitute* and Lennox Robinson's *Church Street* at the New Stages Theater on Bleecker Street. Since the Dublin Gate Theater and the City Center group are no longer on the boards, my notice is chiefly a labor of love, a bread-and-butter letter addressed to the absent. The reader must forgive me for speaking in his presence of pleasures from which he is now forever cut off, but it would be thankless to allow these players to pass unsung into oblivion; in any case, if he hurries, he may still find the box-office open at the little theater on Bleecker Street.

In an ideal state of affairs, the performances of these companies might have been looked on in a critical spirit and even with a certain severity. Richard Whorf and José Ferrer made *Volpone* into a kind of raucous collegiate romp, more reminiscent of a Marx Brothers film than of that terrible Noah's Ark of carnivora that Jonson, master-carpenter, beached on the English stage. The Dublin Gate players, at any rate in the minor parts, had a slapdash style of acting that suggested an Irish housemaid flailing about with a dust-cloth—they gave their roles a lick and a promise and trusted to the audience's good nature to take the will for the deed. And the younger male actors with New Stages, Inc. are a wretched lot, feeble and uncertain in technique, miserably deficient in ease and charm; they seem to be the victims of a vocational delusion.

Yet the very shortcomings of these companies were allied to their most amiable qualities. Toward these groups an audience has been able to feel, for the first time in many seasons, an unguarded emotion, a sense of camaraderie and friendly give-and-take which may in part have been excited by a "popular" price policy at the box-office or by Irish-

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American in-feeling, but to which the blithe spirit of the players themselves made the principal solicitation. These players asked your indulgence where the American Repertory Theater DEMANDED YOUR SUPPORT, and where the commercial theater (*Medea, The Heiress, A Streetcar Named Desire, Antony and Cleopatra*) manipulated your emotions for two hours in a thorough yet perfunctory manner, as though your object in attending the theater was not to give anything at all, even understanding or tolerance, but to receive a certain bargained-for satisfaction, like a customer in a whorehouse. A modesty of ambition, a limitation of purpose, an acknowledgment of weaknesses characterized all the repertory performances; perfection was not aimed at, but only a generous sufficiency; there was no truculence, neither the boorish truculence of financial success nor the weak truculence of artistic failure. The theater was not treated either as "entertainment" in the Broadway sense or as a moral imperative in the manner of Miss LeGallienne or Piscator. The tone taken by these productions was one of pleasant seriousness or of serious pleasantry; the final impression left was one of the humane and the droll.

John Bull's Other Island, The Respectful Prostitute, The Old Lady Says "No!", the four Chekhov comedies, none of these plays are masterpieces, and *Volpone,* as I have indicated, was played as if it had never been one. They are intelligent and witty fancies, located in some region of the mind between the sentimental and the sardonic, even the Sartre play (surely the French *Born Yesterday,* whose political stridencies have been moderated by the direction of Mary Hunter and by the equable performance of Meg Mundy as the prostitute with the vacuum cleaner, till the play seems not quite so much a crude indictment of the American South as a dream that a French savant might have had on the subject of the Scottsboro case, a dream full of distortions and confusions, half-digested facts and conventional notions, moments of terror and interludes of ribaldry, a wonderful hodge-podge, in fact, in the brain of a clever man, to which this company has lent credibility by treating it as a parody which nevertheless speaks truth.

The Old Lady Says "No!" is frankly a nightmare (based on Stephen Dedalus's witticism) which mixes up an eighteenth-century costume piece with a modern expressionist drama. The curtain goes up on romantic Robert Emmet with a price on his head, in the green jacket and top boots, declaiming in blank verse from a garden to his lady-love in the window above. He is surprised by Major Sirr and his redcoats; swords are drawn; he falls to the ground; and at this point the story suddenly collapses. A doctor is summoned to the stage. In history brave

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Robert Emmet would have gone on to make his famous speech to his judges, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, but Irish history in this Denis Johnston version is a play in which a ham actor is performing. The man in the plumed hat and lace sleeves, suffering from concussion, wanders through the streets of modern Dublin, among the drab and uniformed citizens of the De Valera state. He is looking for Sarah Curran, his sweetheart, for Rathfarnham and the lost garden, which is now a trolley-stop, for the lines that he cannot remember, and the freedom for which he died. Everywhere his questions are met with totalitarianized responses, with mass recitatifs, the stiff salute of law and order, and an old crone's obscene cackle. But the jeering crone is Sarah Curran, and a statue of Grattan in the Square which begins to harangue him with the arguments of the great Parliamentarian is his old nemesis, Major Sirr. The beauty of the play is that this is not a one-way irony. Emmet's predicament is half-comic, and if the plumed and booted figure calls into question modern, regimented Dublin, dispirited Dublin itself questions the validity of this tattered hero, this green, lace-bordered Valentine which it has kept so long in its parlor. Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, but is not Emmet himself the father of the brutal lie which confounds him now in the streets? The debate between Emmet and Grattan, between the insurrectionist and the parliamentarian, between violence and peaceable action, arrives at no conclusion, but the difficulty of posing the problem in terms of any absolutes is symbolized by the fact that it is a debate between an actor and a statue—as everyone who has tried to grapple with the question knows, it tends to vaporize into the rhetoric of the gesture or solidify into the marble of abstract thought.

The staging of this production (reminiscent in part of the WPA theater) was very direct, very simple, very funny, very moving; it slipped easily from the heroic to the mock-heroic, from the conversational to the grand, giving each genre its due, without burlesque or inflation; the fall from the sublime to the ridiculous is not such a very great one for the Irish, possibly because they have experienced it so often. This production was the high point of the Dublin Gate's short stay: the play was the most interesting in itself (the Shaw was a little parochial, an Englishman-Irishman joke) and made fewer demands than the others on the subordinate members of the cast. Micheal Mac Liammóir, the star of all three productions, is a real Jack-of-all-trades as an actor: he can play a gentleman, a servant, and a legend with the same nonchalant facility. He might be a fine actor, if he were willing to work at it; he contents himself instead with being a plausible one and with

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exercising every night an easy and affluent charm; a man accustomed to please, he has a rather serviceable and accommodating air, like a familiar guest in a household who will pass the sandwiches or oblige on the piano. A good-sized, sparkling fish in a small and sociable pond, he brings to the theater a little poetry, a little polish, and a great deal of gregariousness. Here in America he was certainly a fish out of water; the critics were antagonized and bewildered by those pleasant and insular manners, just as they were repelled by the Chekhov one-act plays; the modesty of the undertaking alerted their suspicions.

Mary McCarthy

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BROWN AND WHITE (1947) by William deKooning. Oil on paper. 24" x 36". Owned by the artist.

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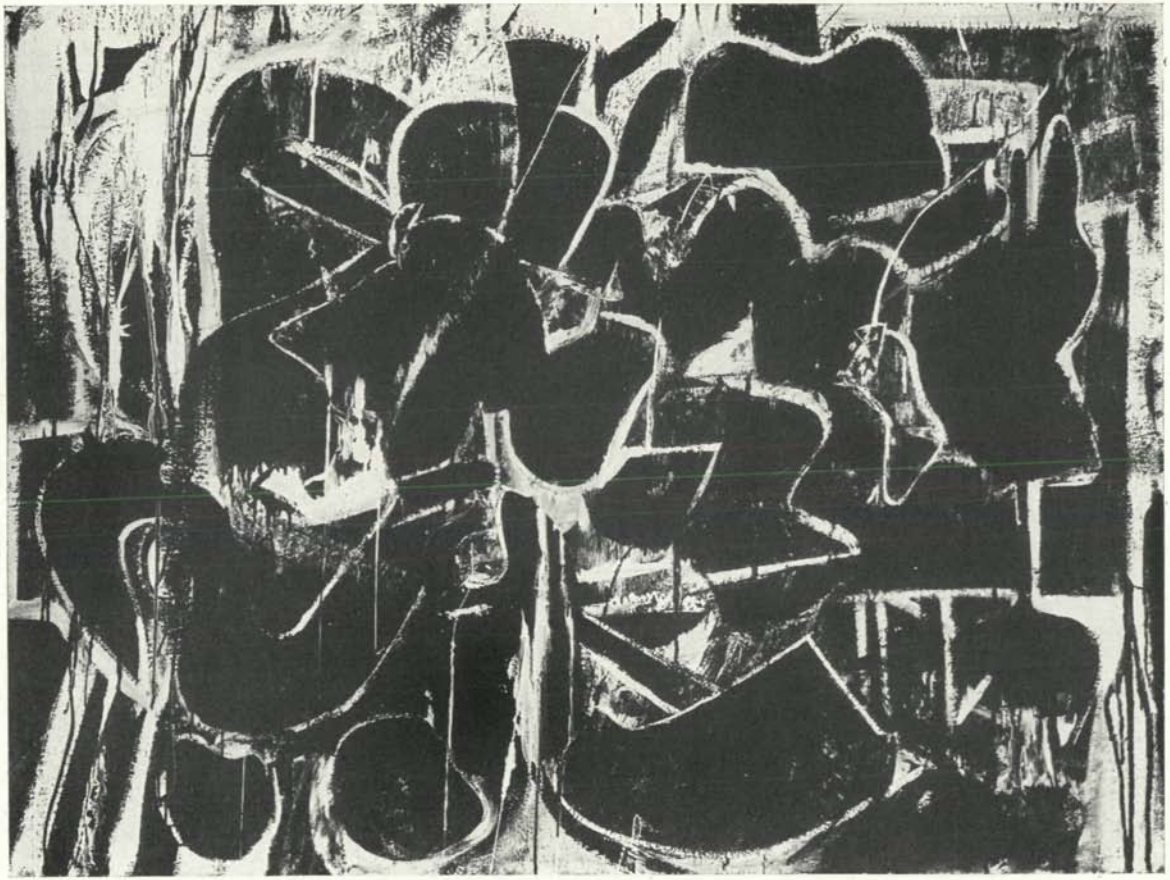

PAINTING (1948) by William deKooning. Oil on canvas. 43" x 56". Owned by the artist.

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ART CHRONICLE

THE CRISIS OF THE EASEL PICTURE

The easel or cabinet picture—the movable picture hung on a wall—is a unique product of Western culture and has few counterparts elsewhere. The form of the easel picture is conditioned by its social function—that is, to hang on a wall—and to realize this we have only to compare its principles of unity with those of the Persian miniature or Chinese hanging painting, neither of which seems to isolate itself quite as much as the easel picture does from its architectural surroundings. Nor does either show so much independence of the demands of decoration. Traditionally, the Western easel painting subordinates decorative to dramatic effect, cutting the illusion of a boxlike cavity into the wall behind it and organizing within this cavity the illusion of forms, light, and space, all more or less according to the current rules of verisimilitude. When, as Manet and the Impressionists began doing, the artist flattens this cavity out for the sake of decorative structure and organizes its elements in terms of flatness and frontality, the easel picture begins to feel itself compromised in its very nature.

The evolution of modern painting from Manet on has subjected the traditional cabinet picture to an uninterrupted process of attrition. Monet and Pissarro in particular, though less revolutionary in other respects, attacked the easel picture's essence by the consistency with which they applied their method of the divided tone, whose operation had to remain the same throughout the picture, requiring every part of the canvas to be treated with the same emphasis of touch. The product of this was a tightly covered, evenly and heavily textured rectangle of paint that muffled contrasts and tended—but only tended—to reduce the picture to a relatively undifferentiated surface.

The tendency initiated by Pissarro and Monet did not work itself out coherently in time. Seurat pushed divisionism to its logical conclusion and applied the divided tone much more inflexibly and mechanically than they, but his concern with clarity of design and contrasts of light and dark sent him in the opposite direction, and while he made

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the picture shallower, he did not erase or dissolve its dominant forms. Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, and the Fauves all contributed to the reduction of the easel picture's fictive depth, but none of them arrived at anything quite so radical in its violation of the traditional laws of composition as Monet and Pissarro had. No matter how much the picture is flattened, as long as its forms are sufficiently differentiated and kept in dramatic imbalance it will remain an easel picture definitely enough. But Monet and Pissarro anticipated at long remove a mode of painting, now practiced by some of our most "advanced" artists, that threatens the identity of the easel picture at precisely these points: the "decentralized," "polyphonic," all-over picture which, with a surface knit together of a multiplicity of identical or similar elements, repeats itself without strong variation from one end of the canvas to the other and dispenses, apparently, with beginning, middle, and ending. Although it still remains easel painting somehow, at least when successful, and will still hang dramatically on a wall, this sort of painting comes closest of all to decoration—to wallpaper patterns capable of being extended indefinitely—and in so far as it still remains easel painting it infects the whole notion of this form with ambiguity.

I am not thinking of Mondrian in particular at this moment, although his attack on the easel picture is in many respects the most radical of all. Mondrian took his point of departure from that stage of analytical Cubism at which Picasso and Braque had arrived around 1912, when their cubes had flattened into little rectangles and half-circles that merged more and more with the background, and the picture was put together of little distinct touches of neutral color—a kind of pointillism—that emphasized the surface by loosening it. (It is significant that the most radical steps taken in painting since Manet's time have in almost every case been accompanied by the tendency to atomize the picture surface into separate brush-strokes.) Mondrian noticed that the Cubism of this period depended largely on the motif of the vertical and the horizontal line, and it was from this observation that he seems to have drawn the conclusion he put into such consistent practice. The pictures that resulted constitute the flattest of all easel painting, but strong, dominating forms, as provided by intersecting straight lines and blocks of color, are still insisted upon, and the canvas, as simplified and balanced as it is, still presents itself as the *scene* of forms rather than as one single, indivisible piece of texture. The new "polyphonic" kind of painting that I refer to uses less explicit oppositions, and it is more nearly anticipated by Picasso's and Braque's analytical Cubism and by Klee than by Mondrian himself.

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Yet, whatever the distinctions made in tracing its origins, the fact is that a number of surprisingly different tendencies in modern art converge toward this new kind of painting, from Expressionism, Cubism, and Klee as well as from late Impressionism, so that what we have to do with here is an important new phase in the history of painting, not an eccentric phenomenon. In France, Dubuffet embodies the tendency toward "polyphonic" painting to some extent in his larger works; there are also his fellow-painters at the Galerie Drouin; the excellent Uruguayan painter, Joaquín Torres García, is another of its exponents; here in America it is practiced by artists so various in their provenance and capacities as Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, the late Arnold Friedman, Rudolf Ray, Ralph Rosenborg, Janet Sobel. Mordecai Ardon-Bronstein, the Palestinian painter whose work was seen here for the first time last month, works in the same direction in his larger landscapes. And I am sure we shall find still others contributing to this vein in the near future.

To characterize what I mean I have advisedly borrowed the term, "polyphonic," from Messrs. List and Leibowitz. For the resemblance in aesthetic method between this new category of easel painting and Schönberg's principles of composition is striking. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, in his extremely important book on Gris, has already sought to establish a parallel between Cubism and twelve-tone music, but what he says in this respect is so general as to be beside the point: he makes it a matter simply of restoring order or "architecture" to arts threatened by formlessness. The correspondence I have in mind is more specific and illuminating. Mondrian's term, "equivalent," is important here. Just as Schönberg makes every element, every voice and note in the composition of equal importance—different but equivalent—so these painters render every element, every part of the canvas equivalent; and they likewise weave the work of art into a tight mesh whose principle of formal unity is contained and recapitulated in each thread, so that we find the essence of the whole work in every one of its parts. (See *Finnegans Wake* and Gertrude Stein for the parallel to this in literature.) But these painters go even beyond Schönberg by making their variations upon equivalence so subtle that at first glance we might see in their pictures, not equivalences, but an hallucinated uniformity.

Uniformity—the notion is antiaesthetic. And yet the pictures of many of the painters named above get away with this uniformity, however meaningless or repellent the uninitiated may find it. This very uniformity, this dissolution of the picture into sheer texture, sheer sensation, into the accumulation of similar units of sensation, seems to

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answer something deep-seated in contemporary sensibility. It corresponds perhaps to the feeling that all hierarchical distinctions have been exhausted, that no area or order of experience is either intrinsically or relatively superior to any other. It may speak for a monist naturalism that takes all the world for granted and for which there are no longer either first or last things, the only valid distinction being that between the more and the less immediate. Or maybe it means something else—I cannot tell. What, at least, it does mean for the discipline of painting is that the future of the easel picture as the vehicle of ambitious art has become very problematical; for in using the easel picture as they do—and cannot help doing—these artists are destroying it.

Clement Greenberg

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BERLIN LETTER

Dear Editors: I suppose our Allied sensibilities would be outraged if one reported that the contemporary despair has very little to do with recent vices of the Germans or with Hitlerism. We like to think in terms of the formula that the Nazis infected the world with their disease; its simplicity and easiness are very tempting. And only recently a page from Goebbel's diary came to light, on which he had written: "Should our great bid for power fail, let us at least leave behind for those who succeed us an inheritance which will destroy them too. The catastrophe must be of such monstrous proportions that the despair of the masses, their cries of agony and distress, will be directed, not against us, no matter how patently guilty, but against those who feel themselves called upon to build up a new Germany out of this chaos." This is typical fascist theatricality: even when he has been swept off the stage of history he would like to throw his voice back into the drama from the wings or the back alley by any kind of ventriloquy. Still, in all historical truth, Hitler and Goebbels are dead and buried. The German and European crisis of today, on its most immediate level, has less and less to do with the era of the Third Reich; its responsible architects are the current masters of world politics, especially Joseph Stalin. On deeper, more long-range, levels it has to do with the material difficulties of modern societies which Marx, in part, foresaw a long time ago, and with the spiritual contradictions which Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Burckhardt (and even Goethe before them) all understood.

Nazism, as a distinctive social force, is a negligible factor in the German picture. The defeat in May, 1945, smashed the party, disintegrated the entire apparatus. The surviving individual fragments have worked themselves into the older traditional pattern of German middle-class society. The muscled brown shirts and SS belong now to the usual underworld of antisocial types; only occasionally is there an act of violence with a political background (like the recent murder of the socialist *Falken* youth leader in Hamburg). The lesser propagandists

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and intellectuals have been returned to the open literary markets, and as gifted hucksters some are employed by the West, some by the East. The business class (only a handful were snapped up by Nuremberg) has become the white-collar wing of the new Christian and Liberal parties and the bulwark of non-Nazi German reconstruction. Sure, you'd have to squint real hard to see genuine evidence of recovery, but the old bourgeoisie is still reckoned as indispensable. In the Ruhr, for example, the restoration of the old managerial class has been quite complete, down to the last legal counsel, corporation officer, industrial adviser, and chamber of commerce. Where there has been some displacement the custodians or trustees are nothing but the agents or front for the real owners. What, by the way, has ever happened to the theory which insisted that National Socialism was "a new form of society"? The moment the framework of the Hitler state fell apart, one found only the familiar economic and legal relationships, and as of today the forms of the traditional German class structure have been seriously affected only by the industrial stagnation and the general national poverty. If Marx could get a visa from London to visit Düsseldorf (no mean achievement for a Jew and a German radical) he would not be surprised to find that capitalism is capitalism and that the proletariat still has a world to win. (He might, however, be rather taken aback that with the social revolution east of the Elbe, which has produced the only working alternative, exploitation is still exploitation and the chains are still rattling.)

The great administrative bureaucracy, too, has remained rooted in its old imperial place. There has been no overhauling, no cleaning of house. Its privileges were not suspended but, on the contrary, status and tenure were immediately guaranteed by the occupying powers. The result is that the enormous machine of Bismarckian civil servants now betrays all the worst vices of its experience in three historic epochs: the bloodlessness of the Empire, the antilibertarianism of Weimar, and the corruption and servility of the Third Reich. As for the *Kleinbürgertum,* it was always among the least attractive elements of old Europe, narrow, petty, hardhearted; and today, robbed of its property and its pose, it manages to give just the proper tone of meanness to this awful tragedy of a sick, diseased society. Sometimes it is pitiful, sometimes it is vicious. In almost every queue the grumble can be heard: *Unter Hitler war es doch besser!* (And no one has the sense or the courage to ask, *When?* when one could order a steak dinner in '37, or when one had to sit in the bunker, night after night, year after year, waiting for the terror and fire of the bombs to pass . . .?) No wonder, complains

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the lady in the streetcar, laundry gets dirty so fast (by which she means brown shirts are no longer being worn). No wonder our sport is in decline, says the enthusiast in the stadium (by which he means no *Kampflieder* are allowed to be sung). If a boy runs and trips in the street it's because nowadays youth doesn't even learn *richtig marschieren;* if the grocer has no *Pfefferlinge* it's the fault of the land reform; if the weather is bad it's because the meteorological bureaus were denazified. But if all this is silly or stupid, there is worse. A doctor in a hospital here told an aged, sick woman of my acquaintance (and with only the normal amount of cynicism about human life), "Get out of the clinic! Do you want to live forever?" And only the other day, when a Polish-Jewish DP got into the subway at Zehlendorf, a man in the corner near the door remarked, "They must have forgotten to burn him. . . ."

It is true the conduct of the war established certain grievous preconditions which rendered the resumption of a progressive, civilized life, on any basis, almost impossible. First, the extermination strategy which threw bombs at schools, hospitals, churches, and homes with the same blitheness as at factories and those ubiquitous "marshaling yards"; a shambles was made of every sizable city in the land, and the people were reduced to utter psychical exhaustion. Second, the refusal to consider the target politically (especially with the insistence on "unconditional surrender") which nullified hope for the (admittedly weak and minor) efforts to bring new, non-Nazi German forces into play. The upshot was that the Germans suffered the terror and the dictatorship and remained inactive in the face of monstrous destruction. Perhaps there can be no *political masses* under totalitarianism, but certainly Western war policies aggravated the dilemma, and, I feel, sacrificed real opportunities.

With the close of hostilities the Western peace strategy revealed itself to be equally shortsighted, equally calamitous. How much havoc has our international immaturity, our political backwardness wrought in the world! Was it so difficult to see that the two great problems of postwar Europe would be (*a*) Moscow's push to dominate a pro-Communist continent, and (*b*) the general European need for a co-ordinated economic recovery program to escape utter poverty and complete collapse? But the West saw only the "German menace" with Werewolf plots and Ruhr rearmament conspiracies. The most charitable formulation of the mistake would be to say that in order to prevent the errors of the last war they committed the errors of this war. I am sure your readers don't have to be reminded that anybody with half a literate eye open saw the outlines of the developing European crisis.

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Take so elementary a handbook of politics as Lippmann's *U.S. Foreign Policy*. Writing in 1943, he takes up the question of growing fissures among the Allies, and notes: ". . . a Russian policy of aggrandizement in Europe, one which threatened the national liberties of her neighbors, would [*should*] inexorably be regarded as such a threat to Britain and America that they would begin to encourage the nations which resisted Russia." And again: " . . . the objective test of whether there is to be peace or war will be whether the borderland between Russia and the Atlantic states is settled by consent or by pressure, dictation, and diplomatic violence. This borderland begins with Finland in the North and includes Sweden, and extends through Poland, the Danubian nations, the Balkan nations, to Turkey, and it includes Germany." This was not prophecy, but the simplest (and not, by far, the most incisive) attempt to look at the real and permanent factors of contemporary politics. Nor is it so amazing to find E. H. Carr in his *Conditions of Peace* (1942), writing on the basis of things all thoughtful people knew since Keynes of 1919, outlining the principles of an ERP which the Western nations could ignore only at their direst peril—the necessity for the immediate organization of a European Relief Commission, a European Transport Corporation, a European Construction and Public Works Authority, a European Planning Authority. . . . The years have fled, and we have paid a high price for our incapacities in political theory and social analysis.

The die, I am afraid, was cast when Eisenhower made his rather ignorant decision that the taking of Berlin would be "a mere show" and allowed the Soviets to enter the capital and to reach the Elbe. Moscow's machine for the occupation dug in. Today, frankly, it is inconceivable how—short of another war—the Communist dictatorship in Germany can ever be displaced. There has been a fundamental, if somewhat chaotic, revolution in the economy with the introduction of the chief measures of economic socialism: an extensive land reform (division of the great estates), and considerable anticapitalist expropriation (sometimes as *Volksbetriebe* in the name of anti-Nazism, sometimes as Soviet trusts in the name of the workers' fatherland). But never before has it been so clearly apparent how little the formal character of property relationships has to do with the establishment of a good and reasonable society. Certainly, if one were to inquire seriously what has happened to the foundation of dictatorship and totalitarianism in this great chunk of Germany since the Nazi fanatics were swept away, it would call for a radical reappraisal of our old notions of the extent to which Hitlerism and Stalinism, national socialism and national com-

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munism, are contradictory and/or complementary. I know all the old historical and theoretical distinctions we used to make. Still, the ugly patterns in reality cannot be blinked away. One great police apparatus has moved in behind the other. The system of political arrests and terror has continued. The same principle of ruthless economic exploitation of machines and labor governs everyday life. Ideological rectitude in the press, in culture, in education, is mandatory; hatred is taught and fear required. No, the people have remained enslaved, for they have only had their masters changed. What may surprise is actually how much of the old system was taken over and reconverted—the black lists at the post offices and telephone exchanges; the block-warden system in the neighborhoods; the Labor-Front-for-the-State apparatus; the strategy of high-pressure cajolery in intellectual life; even down to local party organizers and secretaries. What is new is only that there is no longer on the Marxian side the old familiar courtship with eighteenth-century enlightenment and nineteenth-century optimism; there is no time for a honeymoon with fine idealism. The children of light have become the children of darkness. In the last years I have often had a chance to talk with leaders of Russo-German bolshevism and neither publicly nor privately did they ever trouble to cover their hand or hide their face. No bones about it: they would hound you, arrest you, shoot you, wipe you out.

If in the East there is movement and energy, the familiar spectacle of tyrants and exploiters, in the West there is little energy and much despair, but no tyranny or exploitation apart from the coils of the black market and the general situation of loose suspension in which the people's rights are found under a foreign occupation by military forces of three democratic nations. There is no forced labor and no puppet press, no concentration camps and no fanatical party lines. The absence of these four anti-Freedoms in the onsetting European darkness is, to be sure, notable. But it can't unfortunately be reckoned as anything more than a negative virtue of the Anglo-American condominium.

Were there ever real alternatives? I hate conceding it—because then the whole tragedy has such a terrifying inevitability—but I suspect that once the anti-Nazis failed to strike a serious blow against Hitler there remained almost no hope for a genuine German reformation. A people can only emancipate itself. We conquerors, to be sure, in our (now almost completed) romantic period of military government, went through the formal motions of freeing this unhappy nation. Among the profundities introduced was a French suggestion that all new or reconstructed bridges in the land be reduced in width by two-and-a-half meters, thus

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preventing all future military movement. A British suggestion that all the traditional gratuitous titles in the community—*Herr Oberinspektor, Herr Gemeindevorsteher, Herr Hofmaler Professor*—be forbidden. An American suggestion that the cursed Prussian clippedness of *Jawohl!* be outlawed and the language returned to the simple democratic affirmation of *Ja.* And a Russian suggestion for the purging of, among other things, all operettas which in *Zigeunerbaron*-style perpetuate the feudal fictions and aristocratic illusions of a reactionary past. I really should have liked to take this all very seriously. For, in a way, it was the finest flower of Big Four unity, the cross-pollinated product of allied social wisdoms. Who better than the French (whose Paris of Baron Haussmann had its streets remodeled as military avenues) understand the relations between law and order and motion on the boulevard? Who better than the English know the interplay of titles and caste symbols with the stability and tone of a social order? As for the Americans, language has always been a political signal, with slang serving as a kind of Whitmanesquerie of the mass tongue; and surely the Russians qualify as clinical students of social opiates. My only regret is that the European crisis could not be solved by so charming an intrusion into German society of major foreign historic styles. (What a keen theme for a Henry James!)

Finally, a word about German socialism. Insofar as anything ever really changes in this iron-molded nation—believe me, Heine is still a good guide in the Harz, and George Grosz in Berlin!—there have been a few twists in the destiny of social democracy. From Bebel to Ebert the movement had been afflicted by three cancerous growths: first, its *wealth,* the respectability of its bureaucracy, its vested interests in the established trade-unionism, its linkage to the established society, its shares in industry and banks, its middle-class habits and psychology, its conservatism—second, its *nationalism,* its stereotyped German patriotism, its devotion to the Fatherland, its incapacity for international perspectives—third, its *orthodoxy,* its text-glossing sectarianism, its isolation from the masses of the people. Here, thank God, there have been some changes. The rise and collapse of the Nazi Reich did not mean the destruction of the body of traditional German society, but it did destroy the old German Left. (1) The wealth of the party has been wiped out. It is beginning with a weak, propertyless labor movement, with no headquarters, no buildings, no bank interests, no comfortable well-fed officials. Germany at last has a poor Left, a poor Social Democracy, with nothing to lose and a world to win. (2) The nationalism, in its extreme old vicious forms, has gone too. The Left was anti-Nazi and

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in the underground driven to what in the past would have been considered "betrayal" and even "treason." They were against the Government, against the Society, for its defeat by any and all means; they were against the German war, hoped for (and to an extent worked for) an Allied victory, the victory of the national enemy. Losing not only their wealth but also the "Fatherland," the socialists have been reduced to a radical movement of the dispossessed—a genuinely poor Church! (3) The orthodoxy too has been shattered: the party today with almost a million members in the West alone is conceived of as a mass popular instrument, and in behalf of a program of socialism which is understood as wider than Marxism and greater than the proletariat. Moreover, in Kurt Schumacher the democratic-Left has a leader who possesses the qualities of personal power and mass dynamism, the *enthusiasm,* usually monopolized by the enemies of liberty and reason. He makes his mistakes, but I think he senses that socialism without *charisma* will perish; and I have always felt, unlike alarmed liberal critics, that his demagogic brilliance is properly tempered (rare as it is and difficult as it may be to believe) with a good, wise, self-critical humility.

Melvin J. Lasky

P.S.—Just a last note to tell you that Jean-Paul Sartre has been in Berlin for a week, and astoundingly enough the town, with its theaters, forums, radio stations, cabarets, newspapers, has abandoned all else to give itself passionately over to the problems of art and philosophy. It is curious, and for my own part touching, how in a moment this city can care so little about *Existenz* and so much about Existentialism (it almost amounts to a mass movement).

M. J. L.

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BOOKS

SHERWOOD ANDERSON: THE UNAVAILABLE SELF

The most efficient way academicism castrates a writer is by "placing" him. Once confined to the proper category, he may be conveniently shredded into harmlessness. He no longer has an immediate effect on our lives; we have pushed him into history.

That is what has so strikingly happened to Sherwood Anderson, whose work has recently been anthologized in a large, much too large book by the late Paul Rosenfeld.* Few American writers have been lodged so neatly into so many worn categories—revolt against the village, rejection of middle-class morality, new attitudes towards sex, primitivism in modern culture. These formulas contain, no doubt, a residue of a once exciting and still relevant truth, but at the moment it is the kind of truth that can only remove Anderson's work from us.

For those, however, who remember Anderson as more than a dimming, quaintly chivalrous "figure," Rosenfeld's collection imposes an obligation, at whatever emotional peril, to face the question we might prefer to avoid: what direct literary values and pleasures—quite apart from our recognition of Anderson's "place" in American letters—does a fresh reading of his work provide? For such a direct approach to the body of Anderson's work it is, I think, best to recreate his problems as a writer by examining in cross section his lifelong struggle to come to terms with and eventually master his craft.

I

"Life to Anderson was chaos," remarked Paul Rosenfeld. That is true and important, the beginning of any discussion of Anderson; but the remark is weighted with a neat ambiguity that evades, even as it poses, the central problem about his work. Rosenfeld seems to imply that, while Anderson saw modern life as a social and moral chaos,

* *The Sherwood Anderson Reader,* which he edited for Houghton Mifflin. Rosenfeld's service, it should be noted, was happier in intention than result; by grouping Anderson's pieces under much too formidable thematic headings he involuntarily revealed how limited they actually are.

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he did succeed in formulating an organized—and *organizing*—perception of the nature of that chaos, which then became the sustaining principle of his work. But it is just as likely that Anderson's own vision was as chaotic as modern life; that he was the captive of an experience he could not aesthetically control. For what distinguishes the great writers of our time is not that they see modern life as chaos (any fool knows *that*) but that they impose on it an image of order. These ordering images need not be socially or morally usable; but they must be aesthetically coherent.

It is precisely this kind of structure that is so conspicuously absent in Anderson's work. In one of his better novels *Poor White,* he describes his hero in what might be called the typically Andersonian *gesture of initiation*:

> Hugh was boyishly eager to get on his way and to become at once a part of the life in a new place. The gradual awakening of his mind had given him courage, and he thought of himself as armed and ready for association with men. He wanted to become fully acquainted with and be the friend of people whose lives were beautifully lived and who were themselves beautiful and full of significance.

All of Anderson's novels and stories begin with such large gestures towards liberation suggesting that the character will emerge into a world of nobler dimensions and, more important, that Anderson will liberate him from the constrictions of the gesture itself. The occasions for this immensely grand, if rather vague, revelation arise in book after book: Hugh McVey, poor white, will erupt from stupor into consciousness; Bruce Dudley will reach the heart of his innerness by listening to the dark laughter of Negroes; Beaut McGregor will fulfill himself by joining in the ecstasy of marching men; and George Willard, in the ultimate act of filial rupture, will leave Winesburg. Each book refondles the central image of Anderson's work: the child bursting from the womb, hungering for food and air, clutching for things to feel and swallow. The popular notion that Anderson was obsessed with sex is of course false; he was actually obsessed with birth. His life and work are a series of never quite negotiated births: he sheds being after being, fictional character after character in the hope of finding his unavailable self. For such a writer sex, copulation . . . *two* . . . are inaccessible; his major theme is the birth trauma, the burst from unbeing into consciousness.

But that is all. Consciousness soon turns out to be as black and homeless as unbeing; birth a mere incidence of endless quest. The door, one of Anderson's most persistent symbols, opens to an emptiness as dreadful as that on which it closed; after a while, all that matters

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in Anderson's work is the mere act of opening the door. Nothing grand happens: the poor white remains dumb and dormant; the dark laughter, that elusive token of spontaneity, cannot help; and the marching men march straight into thick fogs of rhetoric.

Anderson raised more excitement than he could settle, more than his materials needed or could absorb. *That was why the tragedy of his stories was that he had to finish them.*

Of few other writers could it be said that their private confusions were so thoroughly revealed in their public writings. Anderson never succeeded in establishing that separation between private and public beings that seems so necessary for most writers and that would have been so especially useful to him; what he was his characters revealed, and even the little of himself that he tried to hide they betrayed. All he knew was that he had to keep trying because, as one of his characters in "Unlighted Lamps" said, "something within me was straining and straining trying to tear itself loose." It was for this persistence and courage, I think, that those who loved him continued to love and hope long after it became clear that there was nothing more to hope for.

But it was to Anderson's great credit that in some not too hidden pocket of his consciousness he was aware of his difficulties. There were a great many things he did not understand, but the one thing he did grasp, perhaps better than most of his contemporaries, was what his role as an artist should be. That was why he so quickly turned away from naturalism; he knew himself well enough to sense that, whatever its uses for others, it was clearly not for him. From the naturalists he absorbed his social sympathy, his curiosity about American life, and his rejection of the "precious" in art; everything, that is, but their central creative approach: their massive accumulation of detail, painstaking social documentation, and historical awareness. In fact, when one examines Anderson's stories closely, one is struck by how remarkably devoid they are of any account of external experience or of recognizable characters. The typical Anderson story is vague in its backgrounds, hazy in its evocation of place and thing; the typical Anderson characters all so very similar: all straining, bursting into nothingness, all lost. Dr. Reefy who rolls up pieces of paper on which are noted his remarkable thoughts (like Anderson's remarkable thoughts, never revealed); Wings Biddlebaum who does not know what to do with his hands; Red Oliver whose final understanding is merely an extension of his muteness; Melville Stoner whose courtliness hardly conceals his loneliness—these thin characters project the disabilities of Anderson's own literary personality.

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Not only did Anderson seek obliteration in the common qualities and simple orders of experience—that painful private pantheism by which he sought to break the barriers between himself and the world by becoming one with children, Negroes, horses, and inarticulate giants—but he also sought obliteration in the very textures of his writing. In his stories there is only an unprovisioned and unlimned half-world, populated by isolated grotesques—*a neither-nor area suspended between reality and symbol.* Towards his pale grotesques Anderson felt and showed the tenderest of loves; and naturally so, since they were all he had. His absorption in a world that was neither descriptively faithful nor symbolically coherent could lead to nothing but a kind of inept humanitarian narcissism. For the realistic principle was beyond Anderson's grasp and, as he sensed, alien to his purpose. He did not care for the "real world"; he wanted to record his own. No one could object to that—provided only that Anderson *had* a world of his own that was accessible.

Here, I think, is the crux of Anderson's dilemma as a writer. Having abandoned or rather having never fully accepted realism and naturalism (for Anderson's purposes, and therefore for the purposes of this essay, a distinction between the two is of slight importance), he could not develop a set of symbols that would sufficiently order his perceptions. He was trapped in a halfway house: *he could neither build massive naturalistic structures nor find an adequate means of transcending the need for them.* The only successes that remained open to him were the sneak attacks of his sketches.

All of Anderson's work may be seen as wracked by this opposition between a partially abandoned public world and an incompletely realized private world. I do not think it too bold to suggest that in this dilemma he was a central representative and victim of modern American writing.

Anderson's conflict can be seen in his inability to integrate narrative and symbol. Bare and bony, his symbols jutted out from his narrative. How often Anderson referred to rather than realized the epiphanies of feeling lurking behind his work; how often did he bear-hug ecstasy to death.

Parallel to this opposition between story and symbol was Anderson's confusion of dramatic sequences with private lyric moods. All too often his narratives are interrupted by the sudden intrusion of Anderson himself, bashfully stating what he despairs of representing. This difficulty can be further seen in his helplessness before the contrary purposes of prose and poetry. Unable to decide, he allowed his style to degenerate into gestures of kindly clumsiness. As he wrote in one of his "poems":

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"There is a story.—I cannot tell it.—I have no words . . . I have a wonderful story to tell, but know no way to tell it."

Anderson felt a strong urge to transcend the limits of the articulate. Much of the sense of strain that one finds in his work stems from the attempt to articulate what is for him inaccessible—an ambition so much more admirable than that of most of his American contemporaries, who were only too ready to play it safe.

These conflicting urges did not escape the notice of Anderson's contemporaries and friends, most of whom saw the problem as involving unique qualities, or disabilities, of his mind. That his mind was rusty, that his writing could frequently have been improved if he had resorted to the usual kinds of intelligence, is certainly true. But I think that Anderson was trapped in a less private, larger dilemma than could have been caused by his failures of intelligence, a dilemma characteristic of his generation and milieu. Given his personal experience and the limitations of the American literary tradition to which he was so closely bound, what relationship could he establish with his craft?

That a mere resort to intelligence was not *his* solution could be seen when, after prodding by adverse criticism, he declared that he *felt* the need to think. As he wrote in *Beyond Desire* of Red Oliver, another of his symbolic heroes: "Red Oliver had to think. He thought he had to think. He wanted to think—thought he wanted to think. *In youth there is a kind of hunger.*" (My emphasis—I.H.) Characteristically, Anderson summed up Oliver's uneasy "need" for thought in an organic, sexual image; and Oliver actualized this "need" not by thinking but by a willful act of personal sacrifice.

Had Anderson developed a coherent personal vision or set of aesthetic symbols his lack of organized thought might not have been too disastrous. Lacking these, he turned to primitivism. But the split in his creative life, his suspension between reality and symbol, made it impossible for him to succeed in the primitivist mode. For the very primitivism by means of which Anderson tried to depict elemental situations and come close to the folk was in his case an extremely arty device that really separated him from the folk; and yet it was not art-worthy enough to serve as a sophisticated means of disengaging himself from the folk. He could find sustenance neither in the deep kinships of the folk bard nor in the demanding traditions of the sophisticated artist.

II

Since he was not unaware of his split literary personality, Anderson conceived of himself as a precursor of a poet yet to come, a poet who

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would light the lamp he could only stir to an occasional flicker. In "Paper Pills" he wrote: "Perhaps our talking of them will arouse the poet who will tell the hidden wonder story of the influence for which the hands were but the fluttering pennants of promise." And Anderson was right: he was a *pre-poet.*

Amidst this chaos of his creative life Anderson had to cast around for a device with which to establish some minimum of order in his work. He found it in the undulations of his verbal rhythms which, it seemed, would serve as the controlling beat and soothing center of his stories. In those pieces where he was most at sea imaginatively, the rhythm is most insistently established. Narrative disintegration is accompanied by increasingly rigid monometer cadences, the false simplicity of which is exaggerated by lulling assonance. When Anderson has his writing under control, the rhythm is subterranean and bracing; so soon as the relationship between meaning and medium is disturbed, the rhythmic beat rises to the surface. In large measure it is responsible for that air of false folksiness, of whining village mysticism that makes some of Anderson's work distasteful.

Once the heavy rhythmic accent became an habitual means of evading literary problems, Anderson's language disintegrated in spectacular fashion. His last pieces, the Lincoln narrative and the folksy editorials are unreadable, full of the lazy *schwärmerei* of populist rhetoric. In the end Anderson read as if he were a blend of Henry Wallace and a small-town intellectual who subscribes to E. Haldeman-Julius pamphlets.

III

Intermittently Anderson wrote first-rate fiction; a very impressive book could be culled from his twenty-four volumes. He wrote best when he had no need to develop situations or show change and interaction—*when he caught his subject off guard.* Or when the subject matter, by its very nature, allowed him to rest in it and feel secure that it would not slip away from him. (Whole books slipped away from him.) When he wrote about children and horses, for all his occasional sentimentality about the former and frequent nonsense about the latter, his recollections were imaginatively fresh. (See "Brother Death.")

Anderson sensed how short-winded he was, and while still at the peak of his form, his lyrical bursts would light up background and foreground as his attempts at sustained narrative could not. In his best stories, most of them in *The Triumph of the Egg* and *Horses and Men,* there was neither character nor narrative development, but only a flash of that one moment in human life that he supposed could reveal its entire

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history. For his parables of incompleteness and incompetence he chose the one form he could handle: the brief sketch. Often he did succeed in suggesting the murky moods of murky characters, which left the reader with the conviction that Anderson, almost in violation of all the known rules, moved one as few other American writers could.

One thing at a time; isolate a character from social setting and human relationships and then sustain a mood-picture of his most characteristic feeling—that was when Anderson succeeded. Then he could evoke the gray loneliness that hovered over all his pages; he could ask, as in his story "Out of Nowhere into Nothing," "Did loneliness drive him to the door of insanity, and did he also run through the night seeking some lost, some hidden and half-forgotten loveliness?" (This was a sentence that gathered together Anderson's most characteristic feelings and images, his most cherished words: *door, run, hidden, half-forgotten.*) He understood little boys and the forgotten town queers whom everyone else passed by; he could express the bewilderment before sex that occupied both his contemporaries and his characters.

But the difficulties of this sort of improvisation could not long be evaded. After a brief acquaintance with his work, the reader could predict the development of an Anderson story. And in all of them the egg—the elemental life force with which Anderson could never come to terms—triumphed over man, as for him it had always triumphed.

In the long and painful effort of America's writers to find some means by which to transform their perceptions into an imaginative structure, Anderson occupied a transitional position—one which largely destroyed the bulk of his work but yet endowed it with a pathos for those who came after him. Perhaps that is the source of one's deep feeling, one's sense of warm kinship with this bumbling writer. If little of his work now seems worth returning to, if all that remains is a few stories, his effort moves us as a mythic event in American literary life.

Irving Howe

CANDIDATE

HENRY WALLACE: THE MAN AND THE MYTH. By Dwight Macdonald. Vanguard. $2.50.

This account, expanded from two widely read articles in *Politics,* does a job on Wallace. Dwight Macdonald has fished around in a decade and a half of the career of the prophet of the people's century

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and has hauled up a mass of illogicalities and contradictions. Thrown together in a sprightly volume, these make entertaining, if not always enlightening, reading. Here are illustrations enough of the vagueness of the Wallace thinking, of the lack of consistency in the man, of his tendency to compromise, of his ignorance, of his downright gullibility. And the whole is set forth in the spirit of good, clean, malice. One could compile an index of the people Macdonald dislikes simply by tabulating the characters with whom Wallace is compared: Woodrow Wilson, Bruce Bliven, Hitler, Herbert Hoover, Eric Johnston.

But not all this heat is productive of light. Macdonald is so eager to get Henry going and coming, to fall upon his victim from both flanks, that he neglects to make sure of the ground from which the attack is launched. No one is likely to come away from the book a Wallace admirer; but neither will many lay it down with an understanding of what made the man or the myth, of why Wallace thinks and acts as he does, of the nature of his following and of his undoubted political appeal.

Macdonald's attitude towards his subject is, at root, ambivalent. On the one hand, Wallace is regarded as a rather pathetic figure, a person "of decent instincts and intellectual ability," perverted by ambition and political life. At the same time, constant reiteration pounds home the fact that the one-time vice-president is a cipher, an eidolon created by the liberal journals in their own image. I will not say that the two positions are essentially incompatible. But this book does nothing to reconcile them.

One difficulty lies in the fact that Macdonald writes as if a myth were not a real thing. Yet whether the image of the exponent of the common man is enshrined only in the hearts of the few hundred thousand readers of the *Nation,* the *New Republic,* and *PM* as we are told here, or whether, as recent events indicate, that idolatry is far more widespread, it is real, and it is related to Wallace's personality and ideas. It is, for instance, hard to imagine the same niche occupied by Harold Ickes or Leon Henderson, figures which superficially would appear more to the tastes of the liberal editors.

The ease with which Wallace falls into contradictions and inconsistencies is significant and understandable. After all, his political career is blanketed by the New Deal and the War, periods of monumental intellectual confusion when he shared the stage at one point or another with such other liberals as Donald Richberg, General Johnson, Senator Ball, and Wendell Wilkie. But the readiness with which the man trimmed his sails to the prevailing winds of the times ought not to blind us to

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the more critical circumstance that there is a central core to his social and political conceptions.

His essential conservatism reaches back to the Iowa background. Here Macdonald, fortunately, does not fall into the "heir of the populists" error; but he might have pointed out that Wallace's America was also William Allen White's America, a wonderful realm where self-interest was elevated to a principle and labeled *progress*. This was the land of the four-hundred-acre farmers, where reform meant higher income and lower costs for everyone. Efficiency, science, planning are perfectly compatible with that goal. The antitrust element was, by contrast, for a few years, an incidental by-product of the local situation. Hostility to big business was never as real as envy on the part of smalltime imitators, imitators whose folk heroes were Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller.

It is from the perspective of such a position that Wallace regards foreign policy. I do not know that he has deviated significantly from the line he laid down, as far back as 1934, in *America Must Choose*, which is basically one of self-containment in the interests of agriculture. Even his one world phase (1942-45) involved all sorts of tortuous qualifications toward that end.

Shortly before his political career began, Wallace's point of view was complicated by a religious experience. Of its precise nature we know little; to speak openly of the religion of a public figure in the United States is little short of an indecency. But not long after 1930, Wallace spent some time in Europe, his family met with financial reverses and lost control of its paper, and he himself passed through an emotional and religious crisis that took him out of the ancestral Presbyterian church and made him a devout Anglo-Catholic. To Macdonald the conversion is simply another sign of Henry's queerness, in a class with his interest in diet; indeed the affair gets less space than the dubious, but juicy, Zenda letters. Yet these religious beliefs have an ideological content, not without relevance to the man's conception of history and of his own destiny.

In these ideas is the proper point of departure for an inquiry into the nature of the unlikely symbiosis between the man and the forces which now support him. How do the Wallace ideas and the Wallace personality thrive in the American political scene? What are the organic elements in the soil that nurtured the myth? Analysis would reveal the sources, a seeming absence of alternatives and a dangerous hopelessness, product of repeated betrayals.

Oscar Handlin

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THE CRITIC AS IDEA MONGER

ANDRE GIDE. By Van Meter Ames. New Directions. $2.00.

Mr. Ames is not primarily a literary critic—which, no deficiency in itself, does put him at a disadvantage in dealing with so literary a figure as Gide. This is a volume in the New Directions series, "The Makers of Modern Literature," but it does not deal with Gide's works as literature and hardly comes close to Gide's real center as a writer. Mr. Ames is interested in something else; it would not even be true to say that he is interested in Gide's themes, which are personal, subtle, and obsessive; his real interest is in certain large general ideas (of Mead and Dewey) and in illustrating these from Gide's career. These ideas are advanced persuasively enough, one has no objection to them, but one puts aside this book feeling that Mr. Ames might have used a number of other authors equally well as a platform.

He is a critic who has found his author's "secret," and he announces it with confident terseness: "It can be said in one word that his secret is science." If our first response is one of shock in attempting to square this with what we know of Gide's work, Mr. Ames as least comes to our assistance with a prompt qualification:

> It must be understood that science for him [Gide] amounts to more than for most people. It means not only the so-called natural but also the social sciences. It means a creative and experimental procedure which unites science with religion and art, as well as with industrial technology.

But the qualification is more misleading than helpful, and I, for one, am quite unable to attach any meaning to a procedure which would unite science with religion, or science with art, or all three together. Mr. Ames, the victim of his own confusing rite of identification, proceeds farther on the same road by somehow fusing the sense of "experimental" as applied to a new literary work with the sense of this word as it is applied in science. When he says of *The Counterfeiters* that it is "like a laboratory notebook," this does in a certain respect describe that novel; but to proceed from this metaphor to an identification of Gide's book with the scientist's setting up of an experimental situation in a laboratory is to distort the nature of both literature and science. The truth is probably somewhat in Mr. Ames's direction: that, despite his obsession with the theme of the irrational in human nature, Gide is in the end committed to the French tradition of rationality and lucidity; but Mr. Ames has allowed himself to run amok in the critical pursuit of "the message" so that Gide emerges as a mere literary exponent of the philosophy of John Dewey.

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Such is Mr. Ames's zeal for this philosophic uniform in which he has clothed Gide that he hardly attempts at all the critical task of examining, placing, and judging Gide's ability at ideas. The fact is that this is much less than Mr. Ames imagines: Gide confesses in several passages in the *Journal* to his diffidence in handling philosophic ideas, and the ideas with which he deals effectively in his writings are within a rather narrow range, concerned with the problem of personal morality, and then chiefly with one aspect of this. But, insists Mr. Ames, Gide is a full-fledged philosopher ("not only a scientific worker but a philosopher of science"—!), and as such "he would be hailed by Bacon, Bayle, Diderot, Hegel, Guyau, Nietzsche, Bergson, James, Dewey and Mead, if not by Marx." All of us who admire Gide will be pleased by such an extraordinary acclaim, but we can't help wondering whether Mr. Ames is not making at this point a rather excessive use of the vote by proxy.

From the opening pages an image begins to form for the reader which, undeclared and only implicit, nevertheless persists to the end: the blackboard, desk, chairs, and the professorial voice at its patient drudgery of explanation in a classroom which might be described by some standard rubric of the American college catalogue as "Philo 2 (or 3?), Scientific Method," or "Philo 4 (or 5?), Philosophy of Science," or perhaps, a more advanced elective, "Philo 45 (or 63?), Literature and the Philosophy of Science." In proportion as the reader still feels the need of attending such courses he will feel the need of reading this book, but the real point—and perhaps it is the chief point in reviewing this book at all—may be just to raise the more general question: Why do so many of our American critics insist on keeping us in the classroom?

William Barrett

SOME LIONS, SOME SHADOWS

LIONS AND SHADOWS. By Christopher Isherwood. New Directions. $3.00.

When, in 1938, *Lions and Shadows* was first published in England, Christopher Isherwood was only thirty-four years old. He had not yet, it might have seemed, given the world a great enough, or substantial enough, body of work to have established a basis for deep interest in his genesis as a writer, the subject of the book. Although he had published fiction which indicated his capacities as a novelist (*The*

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Memorial, Mr. Norris Changes Trains), it was his collaboration with Auden in the writing of several plays, the most successful, witty, and inventive of which was *The Dog Beneath The Skin,* that brought him to the foreground as a member of the then peculiarly fascinating group of young English writers which included Spender, MacNeice, and Day Lewis. There was such a generosity of exciting gifts in this circle, such a strong personal and professional cohesion, so vivid a sense of contemporaneity, that the account which Mr. Isherwood gives in *Lions and Shadows* of its members—for his relations with the circle did much to form him as an artist—makes this autobiographical note more interesting than it would ordinarily be.

It is with an inescapable mixture of curiosity and tedium that we attend to anyone's recital of his youthful experiences: there is the simple curiosity of ". . . so *that's* how it was with *you!* And it was *this* way with *me,*" as well as the stricter interest in the intricate expansions of the intelligence and the spirit, the mystery that is always so fresh (and which with an artist is expected to be *more* mysterious and fresh); there is also the slightly weary foreknowledge of the patterns of our contemporaries' progress into maturity—the influential teachers, the intimates, the first ventures into independence and society, the adolescent high jinks, the torments of irresolution and doubt. Our more real concern is always with the adult artist.

This is not to say that the book does not have enough charm to warrant publication; details make distinctions. There is no documentary solemnity here (it would scarcely have been in order), though much of it might interest the psychoanalyst, to whom the literary projections would probably be so much orange peel over the shaping heart of his object. Mr. Isherwood regards his youth with indulgent irony; if the indulgence wins out rather too often, as, for instance, in his account of the imaginative, gothic-tempered, myth-and-language-making games which he played during his Cambridge days, he makes up for these lapses with much that is purely delightful. In the process of exposing the nerve and posturings of these literary youths, Mr. Isherwood's narrative equipment is well employed; his characterizations are sharp, amiable, and sometimes very funny. Though he himself emerges as a figure a little tiresome, because of his excessive attention to the minute turns of his tremors and traumas, his other portraits are very engaging, full of sprightly perception, and in several instances are highly suggestive of the later men.

Gertrude Buckman

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VARIETY

ON MEETING A PHILOSOPHER

In appearance he has nothing of the philosopher. He is short and stocky; his hair is thick and jet black, with occasional white streaks. When he emerged from the small skiing hut, high up in the mountains, to meet me, he was dressed in the costume of a Swabian peasant. His heavy, squarish skiing boots (it was summer), emphasized still more strongly his relationship to the soil. He comes of peasant stock from the Black Forest and, like Péguy, he has remained "a peasant by tradition." His brother still farms in the region. Martin Heidegger, too, has never left it. When Hitler called him to Berlin in 1935 he rejected the offer. The world had to come to him, to Freiburg, to sit at his feet. There he lives, with Hellingrath's edition of Hölderlin's works. Just as one finds here, in this native soil, the key to the mystery of Hölderlin, so one will also probably find the key to Heidegger's philosophy and its assessment here, in the conflict between the timid peasant in him and the expanse of the universe which he confronted with the essence of its nothingness. In his *Memorial to Hölderlin,* the poet of the Homecoming, Heidegger has written his own memorial: "The Serene holds and preserves everything in tranquillity and wholeness. The Serene is fundamentally healing. It is holy. For the poet, the highest and the holy are fundamentally the same." And to Heidegger, thinker and poet are one and the same—"the highest, 'above the light.' "

When he speaks he seems to try to disappear behind his words, as if afraid of them. His voice is subdued and quiet, a continual whisper. When he delivers a lecture he reads closely from his typescript, without ever looking up, like Aldous Huxley. But Heidegger seems to have nothing wrong with his eyes. It appears rather as if he were conscious of the poet's last leap and of its consequences which he seems prepared to accept.

It is the same with his written word as with his spoken word. Both are his means of expression and both try to escape from expressing. Both withdraw from the world which they create: the one into stillness, the other into new formulations, into an almost private language of its own. His writings can only be unraveled as James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* can be deciphered: with patience, understanding, and the will to understand. But it needs a translation, preferably an English one, to break down the inbred heaviness of his thought. His words are the fear of the world

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which they themselves have thrown into confusion. And they seem so constructed as to fight their way against their own fear, far away from the soil of home but stretching towards the roots from whence they have come, towards the "still-reserved" discovery. "Their sacrifice holds concealed the poetic call to the closest in the homeland, even though the reserved discovery should remain reserved." It would, however, be wrong to conclude that Heidegger admits no possibility of escape or return. But he sees the sacrifice which both, escape and return, demand. He was quite definite to me on that point. But he seemed far away in his own contradictions.

To get at him, even physically, was an almost impossible task. The policeman in Freiburg had never heard of him and did not know his address. But perhaps he was new. He looked weary and old. At Heidegger's house, a French officer opened the door. That was nothing unusual. Upstairs, Mrs. Heidegger guarded the last secrets: the professor was not in the house, he was not in town, he was not visible to journalists. There had been—I learned that later—a stream of journalists, mainly from France.

Many French journalists seem to be partisans. They do not explore a situation but rather go out to state a case. One of them, a Communist, headed his interview, "Like God in France: Heidegger Among Us." Jean-Paul Sartre printed two interviews in one issue of *Les Temps Modernes,* one for the Master, the other against him. Another Frenchman discovered when he sat down to write up the conversation that there had been no point of contact with the philosopher. He overlooked a slight error on his part: he had tried to discuss existentialism with an existentialist. But it needed a newspaperman to sum up the situation. He wrote that Heidegger was only interested in "how to exchange his German marks into dollars." A cultural journal in Berlin, published under Russian license, reprinted the article of the French Communist. The persecution was in full swing. Heidegger withdrew into his skiing hut, all by himself. The field, meanwhile, was clear for distortion.

In America, in the PARTISAN REVIEW, Hannah Arendt (a pupil of Professor Jaspers who, by a coincidence, showed me a copy of the issue in Heidelberg) drew the "final" conclusion: Heidegger has nothing to say. Or if he has it could only be a renunciation of what he

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has said already. There will be, there cannot be, according to Hannah Arendt, a continuation of *Time and Being*. One must correct that impression. The second part of *Time and Being* is written. It lies, in manuscript, next to a work on Nietzsche and the nature of nihilism, next to a weighty manuscript on logos, next to some ten or more major philosophical works—all in manuscript, all in the tiny skiing hut, "over and above" being, artificially cut off from the world, with the rain falling into the valley far down below. The setting was very Heideggerian. Perhaps that was the way it had to be.

Originally the French, in whose zone "Fribourg" is situated, had thought of Heidegger as the glittering jewel in their cultural schemes. But the Germans objected. So did some French Communists later on. The French authorities consulted a venerable German who should never have been consulted because he was too closely involved. As a result, Heidegger was retired. When I mentioned the incident in the *Manchester Guardian* the French reacted, saying indignantly that they had never forgotten Heidegger's past and the gloom contained in his philosophy. The Church authorities in Freiburg sighed with relief: the man who had denied God was out of the reach of men. But Heidegger, without a trace of vehemence, shook his head and told me that they had

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never understood his teachings. "I do not deny God," he said, "I state His absence. My philosophy is a waiting for God. Here is the problem of our world. Not in gloom."

The most impressive feature of the atmosphere was, without doubt, Heidegger's magnanimity. One could have expected words of bitterness or complaints. But he did not utter a single word of accusation. In fact, though conscious of all happenings, he preserved an uncanny serenity—"so that the Serene may reach men in the serenifation." The words are his. But what was lacking was a trace of Hölderlin's "joyousness." The healing was far from being accomplished.

It was a sad afternoon: the rain in the valley, the bird with its feathers clipped, and the words slipping out of the protection of the careworn poet. He shook my hand and said, "I am glad you have come." He also asked for a copy of the *Letters of T. E. Lawrence* (if that gives a clue to him). And I left behind me the incomplete "Homecoming," the still reserved discovery, and a setting that was all too real. It was existentialist: *Being was not allowed to be; there was nothing but a nothing which should never be.* The words are mine. They probably mean nothing.

Stefan Schimanski

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